

LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1897.

"Forbidden."

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"LED ON," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DAY WITH THE GUNS.

LADY MALVERN emerged from her retirement at half-past twelve, and asked immediately for Lady Falconer. This was a sign of special favour, for the arrangements for the day were announced on a card in the hall, and no further instructions were considered necessary. Those who wished to lunch with the sportsmen were expected to be in the hall at the hour named, and it was known to all her intimates that the Marchioness waited for nobody. The others might come after her at any hour they pleased. She did not fidget herself about them in the least. There were the carriages to convey them wherever they wished to go; and if they preferred to stay at home they would find an excellent luncheon prepared for them, in the smaller dining-room.

On this occasion she started alone with Beatrice in a victoria, and deluged her with a flood of worldly advice on the way. She listened with profound attention, and with much inward amusement, wondering what her father would think of such maxims as "Never express an opinion that is likely to be unpopular," or, "Be as good as you like, but never seem too easily shocked by other people." Lady Malvern really wished to do her niece a good turn, and if it had been Beatrice's desire to develope into a thorough woman of the world, she could not have had a better instructress.

When they reached the appointed rendezvous they found the shooting-party already assembled with rampant appetites. Lady

Malvern went at once to inspect the game and to speak to the head keeper. The bag was pronounced pretty fair, considering the late start, and all seemed in the highest spirits. Major Mortimer had been taken once more into favour by the astute little beauty, because she found that the other men were afraid of undertaking her. She claimed to have brought down three birds with her own dainty gun, and the Major was far too considerate to contradict her. Vere Haughton—a fashionable woman whom men always admired, whilst her own sex dubbed her unhesitatingly “plain”—said nothing about her exploits; but sat apart under a hedge talking to Sir Henry Brown as he lay on the grass at her feet smoking a huge cheroot. The keepers, one and all, hated feminine guns, and Grierson—the “head boss”—was never tired of warning her ladyship that some day there would be a terrible accident if petticoats were allowed to “interlope” where they had no business.

Beatrice, as she looked at the heated faces, the untidy hair, and the masculine attire of the feminine shooters, felt quite ashamed of her own irreproachable appearance, and tasteful frock of brown cloth, with pink silk blouse.

She was mentally deciding that she was quite “out of it,” when up came Townshend-Rivers—a great authority on social matters—whose approval was considered a *cachet* in itself. He told her that she was a positive refreshment to faded eyes. “We’ve seen all that sort of thing again and again,” with a depreciatory wave of his hand towards the two sportswomen. “Women have been trying to ape men for the last fifty years—the dodge is as old as our grandfathers, but the type of the frankly feminine English girl, has died out, and you must be its revival. Come and be fed,” leading the way to the luncheon-table which was spread under the boughs of a gigantic chestnut, “or you may die out as well, and then our last hope will be gone. A glass of champagne for Lady Falconer.”

“You won’t get it,” Lady Malvern said, with a twinkle in her eye—“I found that ‘the Boy’ interfered with straight shooting, so I stopped the supply.”

“Glad to hear it,” remarked Major Mortimer. “Our own lives will be safer, but it’s rough on the birds.”

“D—— the birds,” muttered Falconer in an undertone; “they are bred for our amusement.”

“Yes,” murmured Townshend-Rivers, who had overheard his

solitary contribution to the conversation, "the greater naturally prey on the less—but this does not always end in the survival of the fittest."

"Not when I'm at the end of the gun, and a pheasant at the other?"

Rivers looked him over coolly, and shook his head. "No, you wouldn't be so blatantly conceited as to compare yourself with a cock-pheasant?"

Falconer said nothing, but seemed busily engaged with his luncheon—which was more interesting to him than any "abstract questions." Rivers turned to the one who seemed to him the incomparably "better half," and entered into a discussion as to whether, from a moral point of view, it were not better to be the "destroyed" rather than the "destroyer," but Beatrice ranged herself with vivacity on the other side. She was too full of life and youth to contemplate annihilation with anything but revulsion, and she had a warm supporter in her hostess, who leant forward and said with decision—"I don't care a farthing for the moral of it, but I say frankly that I would rather destroy anything—from a pug dog to Westminster Abbey—than be destroyed myself."

"Ditto," said Falconer readily, for this was a sentiment he could heartily appreciate. Before his wife's broader vision spread a picture of the beautiful grey stone pile—the shrine of England's most hallowed memories—with every pointed arch and stately tower wreathed in smoke and flame—whilst across the wide space of the Broad Sanctuary skipped and hobbled an old woman with a grin of triumph on her withered face.

"Not the dear Old Abbey!" she exclaimed involuntarily.

"Yes, my dear, even the dear old Abbey," Lady Malvern replied with a decided nod. "One old woman may seem a poor thing in the balance, but she's more than all the Abbeys in the world to me."

"And to us all," put in Major Mortimer with a low bow. "In fact I greatly prefer myself to Windsor Castle; and if it came to one chance offered to either of us, I should take that chance, and let the castle shift for itself."

"I bet you would," drawled Townshend-Rivers, "because you are all pitting yourselves against stones and mortar, but is there one of us who would give up his own life to keep another's intact? That is the question."

"Pass the claret, please—you choose such dry subjects," muttered Sir Henry.

"I suppose if a woman weren't too ugly or too heavy I should have to plunge into the fire to pull her out," Mortimer remarked with his eye-brows up, as if he would not relish the prospect—"but I don't want it to happen."

"I shouldn't like to be the woman," Lady Crosby asserted, though she conjured up a romantic vision of a golden head resting on a man's square shoulder, and two forms slipping down a fire-escape in frantic haste.

"In the case of a wreck, and only one place left in the boats—hanged if I shouldn't take that place," Falconer said with startling veracity.

A crimson wave rushed over his wife's face. "How can you say such a thing?" she asked indignantly. "You know you wouldn't."

"I know I should," he said doggedly, and everybody believed him. "There's a lot of sentimental rubbish talked about women. A sailor with iron muscles and a good amount of common sense, is expected to make way for any hysterical idiot of a girl, who will be a burden to everyone she comes near, if she gets to shore. I don't see it, myself."

Beatrice kept silence, but her red lips were tightly compressed, and her eyes flashed angrily. Why did Falconer make himself out such a cold-blooded egotist?—the very type of man she most detested.

"There's something in what you say," Rivers remarked quietly, "only you could not have an examination of character, when the waves were wanting to swallow you, and the woman might be an angel—and the man—a beast."

"Very likely," said Lady Malvern, drily, "There are a great many beasts about beside those in the Zoo."

"Too many women anyhow," muttered Falconer, "and not an angel amongst them."

"You would not know what to make of her if there were," snapped his aunt. "Now go on with your shooting. Grierson's growing impatient, and so am I. Come, Beatrice. Let us try and get into more elevating society—your husband's sentiments are too frankly revolting."

The Marchioness having decided that she ought to go home in

order to receive a fresh contingent of guests who were to arrive that afternoon, finally drove in quite a contrary direction. As they careered over the country, past ploughed fields where the ruddy earth was freshly turned, over hills whose slopes were still thickly covered with verdure, with glimpses of wide valleys, and here and there the silver Avon gleaming white between its willowed banks, Beatrice had but little time for reflection. As the broad river went on without stopping through busy towns and sleepy villages, and long tracts of solitude and silence, so the Marchioness's tongue went on without a halt till the victoria stopped within the stately portico, which seemed such an anachronism in connection with the irregular architecture of Ethelred Hall.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXTRA MAN.

BEATRICE'S high spirits deserted her that evening, and she went down to dinner with an expression that would have suited far more tragic circumstances. Her husband was not ready, so she hurried down to the drawing-room in hopes of having a few moments to herself; but as she strolled up to the elaborately carved fire-place, and stretched her hands to the genial blaze of the pine-logs, somebody came in by another door, and she looked round with a feeling of annoyance at being disturbed. The next moment her face lighted up, and she almost ran across the square of pile carpet to meet Hugh Pemberton. "Oh here you are! Why didn't you come before?" she asked, as she shook hands enthusiastically.

Then she sat down on a sofa with the fire-light playing on her animated face, and plunged into a talk about all the dear people at home. She had scarcely realised how much she had longed for them till one appeared who had seen them only the day before, and knew all their ways—most of their friends—and many of their occupations. The Bishop was now established at St. Christopher's, and was hoping for his daughter's arrival as he intended to break out into proper episcopal hospitality before the beginning of Advent. Aunt Judith sent word that she would not feel at home in the palace until Beatrice was inhabiting one of the many bed-rooms.

"Dear old thing!" she cried with a tremble about the corners of

her pretty mouth. "There never was anyone in the whole world so good and sweet as Aunt Judy."

Meanwhile the room had gradually filled, and many curious glances were thrown towards the beautiful girl in the picturesque gown of brown tawny velvet and apricot bengaline, who seemed entirely engrossed by the soldierly-looking man who stood before her. There were many strangers who were anxious to know who she was, and as Townshend-Rivers was supposed to be a walking "Who's-who," he was attacked on every side.

"Who's the girl in the tiger-colouring who has no eyes for anybody but that fair-haired boy?"

"Lady Falconer."

"And the boy—that particularly fortunate boy?" with a touch of acrimony.

"Can't for the life of me remember." Rivers could not find it in him to say he didn't know. "Some cousin, from the frankness of the interest displayed—or that most dangerous hanger-on—friend of my baby-hood."

Rivers chuckled as he made the remark, but the chuckle died away into sudden gravity as he found Falconer's massive form standing behind him. In spite of his affected cynicism, he was a thoroughly good-natured man, and he was vexed with himself at the time because he was afraid that he had done Beatrice a bad turn.

A disreputable old man, whose wealth covered as many sins as the cloak of charity, was told off to take in Lady Falconer. She swept past her husband with her head held high, and the next instant turned to the Millionaire with her brightest smile. The knowledge that she had a dear old friend under the same roof with her had sent up her spirits with a bound. She resolutely kept her resentment against her husband in the back ground, and let herself drift with the flow of cheerfulness that surrounded her.

The Millionaire wore a perfectly made wig of thick brown hair, a set of teeth that had a few artful defects introduced here and there, which were the perfection of art, a carefully prepared complexion, and looked like a man in the prime of life, if the lamps were adequately shaded. Beatrice knew nothing about him except that he bore a grand old name which had figured on the pages of English History. His past was like a book on a dusty shelf, his present was close under her eyes in its smart binding and gilded leaves, and looked

attractive. He had a store of witty sayings and short pithy anecdotes, which he brought out in the most prodigal manner, when he found her an appreciative listener, instead of a dressed-up doll—only intent on attracting his admiration. He had rarely come across a girl who suited his taste so exactly. She was pretty enough for anything, with a throat like a Hebe's, a skin like the inside leaf of a white rose, a pair of eyes, deep and dark and fathomless as any that ever shone out of one of Long's canvasses—and yet sparkling as if stolen from some gipsy-face of Murillo's; and together with all this, which was enough for any girl, she was absolutely intelligent, though not advanced—thank Heaven! Where had that big lout of a man, Falconer, picked up this prize? He must ask Rivers. It was like matching a thunder-cloud and a sun-beam. Somebody ought to have interfered.

Hugh, watching Beatrice in the pauses of a brisk conversation carried on by Millie Crosby, wondered why her face had worn such a sad expression when he first caught sight of it in the drawing-room before dinner. Now she looked as happy as any other girl, with her old mischievous sparkle in her eyes, and an oft-recurring smile on her lips. She had taken to the part of a "grande dame," he thought, very kindly, and the marriage would probably turn out better than his uncle prophesied. He never guessed that her bright spirits were due to the stimulus given to them by his own arrival, and so abandoned himself to a sort of gentle flirtation with the ever-ready Millie with an undejected mind. In spite of Falconer's disparaging verdict, there was nothing of the prig about him. He did not look upon right and wrong as convertible terms, or make a point of falling in love with his neighbour's wife, or regard pleasure as the one aim and object of existence, neither did he forswear it. He was anxious to get his fair share of enjoyment out of life, but he was devoted to his profession, and rarely anxious to shirk work which might lead to his future advancement. He was capable of going to Church on Sunday without scoffing at those who elected to stay at home, and he was not ashamed of attempting in some sort of fashion to do his duty to God and his neighbour, though his comrades might laugh at him, in the pride of their cheap scepticism. With all this he was a thorough man, able to hold his own in whatever society he found himself, and Beatrice saw with keen delight that he made his way at once with most of the people in the house.

No one treated him to that cool stare with which Society tries to quell an aggressive outsider. They acknowledged him to be as fit to be one of themselves, when they saw that he was a capital shot at the *grande battue* held on the Saturday: they fraternized over golf, about which he was nearly as crazy as anyone else; and Lady Malvern herself became one of his staunchest champions when she had taken him the round of her stables, and discovered that he was almost as good a judge of horseflesh as she was herself.

As the ladies were going upstairs to bed one night, Mrs. Haughton drew close to Lady Falconer, and said in a low voice: "A word of warning before I go away—Millie means to annex your friend."

Beatrice laughed, and said cheerfully, "I am glad that she appreciates him."

Vere stared, unable to understand the situation. "I shouldn't allow it if I were you."

"Why not? Hugh is quite able to take care of himself. She won't break his heart."

"But he belongs to you."

"Yes, in a way. He is one of my oldest friends—the nearest imitation of a brother."

"Ah—now I can understand you—" smiling as if reassured as to Lady Falconer's being made of the same stuff as herself. "You feel so sure of him that you defy Millie to do her worst."

"Exactly," with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes—"I am only sorry for the Major."

"I wish I could stay on to see the fun," Vere said. "Do send me a scribble—with all the exciting details. I should love to hear them."

With a friendly kiss, they parted—and Beatrice went slowly down the corridor to her own room, reflecting that life at Ethelred Hall was becoming every day more and more like a column in a Society paper.

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNPLEASANT STORY.

It was a very cheerful gathering at Ethelred Hall, but in spite of all the laughter and gaiety, Beatrice felt that a storm-cloud was hanging

over her head and growing in substance as the days flew by. Her husband seemed to be changing as quickly as the tints of the foliage in Autumn. He used to laugh at her smallest jokes as if they were witticisms of the most superior order; but her attempts at fun absolutely withered away under the effect of his portentous gravity. He had been given to repeated osculatory demonstrations of affection, but now she rarely got more from him than a tolerably friendly nod. Every now and then a fear crossed her mind that they were actually slipping apart like two boats too loosely tied together; but she would tell herself that she was growing fanciful, and cast the thought behind her like a broken horse-shoe.

It was one of those bright days in mid-November which sometimes come to remind us that the sun has not forgotten to shine although he has chosen to hide himself lately in a mantle of fog, so Lady Malvern made up her mind to pay a distant call; and as she hated a long lonely drive she begged Beatrice to forswear a projected game of golf and bear her company. Beatrice had often given up some secretly planned pleasure on finding that Aunt Judith was going out in the carriage, so she had grown into the uncommon habit of self-sacrifice, and submitted without giving herself the aspect of a martyr.

Millie Crosby exclaimed, "What a fearful shame!" but she was inwardly pleased at the thought that she would be able to appropriate Captain Pemberton without any interference from his original owner. Hugh, on the contrary, looked frankly disappointed, whilst Lord Falconer listened to the discussion as if he had not the slightest concern in it, and sauntered away to the stables before the matter was finally settled.

Townshend-Rivers put the ladies into the victoria, and looked surprised when the Countess said "Percy's Court" to the powdered-haired footman.

"Do you know that the old lady has friends staying there?" he asked rather faster than usual, just as they were driving off.

"Yes—yes," she rejoined impatiently for she hated to be thwarted in anything, however unimportant, "I don't suppose they will bite us."

The horses—a high-couraged, perfectly matched pair of thoroughbred bays—sprang forward, and whisked the light carriage at a rapid pace down the avenue as if they were in as great a hurry as their mistress.

Townshend-Rivers shook his head doubtfully, but as it was useless to utter remonstrances which could not be heard, he only remarked to himself, "A pretty kettle of fish!" and went to fetch his golf things.

"What a fussy man he is!" Lady Malvern exclaimed, although it was the last epithet that anyone else would have applied to him. "As if we were schoolgirls, to be frightened at visitors."

"He must have had some motive. I wonder what it was" rejoined her niece, whose judgment had not been clouded by irritation.

"Pure love of interference. I did not consult him about my drive, so he wished to put a spoke in our wheel," drawing her sables closer round her thin little body.

They drove on down a road which appeared to be interminable, through the flattest, most uninteresting scenery, which seemed as if it could not possibly belong to Warwickshire. Suddenly they began to descend a hill, and as a glorious prospect broke before them Beatrice discovered that they had been on an upland several thousand feet above the level of the valley.

Percy's Court nestled at the foot of the hills like a huge grey bird in a nest of trees. The trees—mostly grand old birches—opened out, and left a broad lawn in front of the windows, giant deodars made a screen as of dark green laces on the one side, whilst weeping willows with drooping branches that kissed the soft green turf on the other, lent a softening touch to the picture.

As Beatrice followed her aunt down a stone colonnade containing a winter-garden, the silence was so intense that she felt as if she were entering the cloister of a cathedral. The nodding yellow plume in Lady Malvern's bonnet seemed grotesquely out of place, and when they emerged into a hall with softest carpets under foot, but vaulted arches overhead, she expected to hear the solemn tones of an organ pealing forth a message of holiness. The light was very dim, and the hall seemed to go off into mysterious corners. As she threw a hasty glance round, she met the gaze of a pair of eyes which were fixed upon her with an intensity of feeling, whether of surprise or admiration she could not guess—which made her stop against her will. Then she discovered that a young man was lying on a sofa, covered with tiger-skin rugs. On his lap were some of the paraphernalia connected with painting, but the spray of taxonia which he had evidently been trying to depict after a bold style of

his own on the canvass, had slipped from the corner of the screen on which it had been hung, and was now lying out of his reach on the floor. She could see by one glance at his face that he was incapable of movement ; it was therefore quite impossible for her to pass on without coming to his assistance.

Moving quickly across to where he was lying, she picked up the spray with an easy grace that his artist eye fully appreciated, and turned with a smile to ask if that would do, as she arranged it carefully in what she fancied was its original position.

" Excellently," he said with the fervent gratitude of the helpless for ready assistance, " A thousand thanks." His thin face—which had no beauty except what was given it by the patient spirit within—flushed to the roots of his fair hair.

" Beatrice ! " came from near the door in her aunt's sternest tone, and she had to hurry away without another word.

Lady Malvern gave her a look which was angry because she was agitated, and she hated to be upset , but she had to master her displeasure as their names had already been announced, and a charming old lady was advancing to meet them. Beatrice looked eagerly round the large room, whose walls were tinted with the softest grey of a dove's wings, and hung with pictures which had once been on the line at Burlington House. She was looking for the objectionable people against whom Mr. Townshend-Rivers had tried to warn them, but she could see nothing eccentric in the two elderly ladies sitting with Mrs. Percival—one with a fair patient face which had some resemblance to that of the young man in the hall, the other a prosaic, severe old maid with a mole on the very tip of her quaint nose, who was knitting as if for her life.

Lady Malvern introduced Beatrice simply as " My niece " to Mrs. Percival and to no one else. As she was generally very careful about her social duties, Beatrice was rather surprised. A conversation began immediately between the three other ladies, and the old maid, whom Mrs. Percival had addressed as Sophy, plunged at once into talk, with the one who was rather left on her hands. Presently Mrs. Percival turned to Beatrice and asked her if she would care to see the flowers in the conservatory, and begged Miss Wingfield to take " Lady Malvern's niece " and show her everything.

Miss Wingfield rose, knitting in hand, and led the way through a side-door into a glass house with a bell-shaped roof which was filled

with plants of great beauty, arranged with artistic skill. Large trails of taxonia hung down in festoons and reminded Beatrice at once of the invalid. Brimful of interest, she asked eagerly what had happened to him—was it an accident or a case of incurable disease?

Miss Wingfield actually stopped her knitting as she said in surprise, "Did you never hear of Gerald de Winton? It's a very very sad story. Shall we sit down here whilst I tell it you?" pointing to a rustic seat half hidden amongst the shrubs.

Beatrice, dressed in the latest fashion, looked a striking contrast to the little plain spinster, as she sat facing her with a tender interest in her large dark eyes, her hands idly crossed on her lap, while Miss Wingfield was habited in a tight green serge with no ornamentation to conceal the meagreness of her figure, and her active little fingers were as busy as her tongue.

"Gerald de Winton was staying in a famous castle in Yorkshire with a large party of young people. Amongst the girls there was a very pretty golden-haired flirt named Rose Carlyle, whom Gerald absolutely worshipped. All went well until another man arrived from abroad, a great big masterful fellow, who seemed to captivate Rose at once. The girl was a flirt, as I told you," Miss Wingfield went on with a sudden quaver in her voice, "but I don't think she could help herself this time. The man seems to have had a mysterious influence over her—next door to hypnotism. She gave him the dances she had actually promised to the other poor boy; she met him in the flower-garden, at the very hour she had fixed to be with Gerald in the kitchen-garden under the old pear-tree; and altogether, she behaved as if she were not mistress of her own actions. Of course the two quarrelled about her all day, till one night, Gerald found that he could stand it no longer. He determined that it should be settled one way or the other before he went to bed, and so it was, poor-fellow—settled for life as far as he was concerned."

"The other man was accepted?" Beatrice asked eagerly, with an intense interest that surprised herself.

"No—not that," with a dolorous shake of her head. "When the men left the smoking-room, Gerald did a most unwise thing, he followed this man to his own room which was down at the end of a corridor. What passed we don't quite know, but I believe Gerald asked him if he were serious in his attentions to poor Rose, and if

he meant to marry her. Perhaps he had no right to ask, but he was half crazy at the time with the uncertainty. The other flew into a violent passion. He used the most horrible language. Joe Somers who was in the next room heard him, and began to be uneasy about Gerald's safety. At last, as the noise increased, he thought it best to interfere. He went to the man's door, and opened it. The window was open—the furniture knocked over or pushed out of place, the whole room looked as if a fearful struggle had taken place, but Gerald was nowhere to be seen.

"What have you done with de Winton?" Joe asked at once.

"The man who was standing in the middle of the room with folded arms turned round, and Joe told us afterwards that his face looked like a fiend's. 'I've put him outside the window,' he said fiercely, 'and I'll do the same to you if you bother me.'

"Good God—you must have murdered him!" Joe cried, and without waiting for anything more, he rushed downstairs to see if the poor boy was alive or dead. They thought he was dead at first, but clever doctors brought him round, and mended all his broken bones—but his spine received some injury, and he will always be helpless as a baby till God takes him to himself," she said in a choked voice.

"But the wretch who did it—what was his name?" Beatrice asked, quivering all over with fierce indignation.

"We never mention it, by Gerald's express desire; from the first, he insisted on the affair being hushed up. He said that the man was mad with passion, and did not realise what he was doing. Oh the boy is a saint—a positive saint," she exclaimed excitedly, and dropped one of her needles on the tessellated floor to the great detriment of her work. "To think of him with every hope blasted—he wanted to go into Holy Orders—he had always set his heart on it—but he had to give that up as well as everything else! Rose, poor child, half wild with pity and penitence would have married him gladly—but he would not let her be burdened by a cripple. It broke his heart, but he was quite firm, and with all his gentleness, when he has once made up his mind as to the right or wrong of anything—nothing will move him."

"But the wretch who hurt him, what has he done to show his remorse? He ought to have devoted his life to Mr. de Winton."

"Done? Absolutely nothing; he left the Castle that night, although there was no train at that hour to carry him away either

North or South. There was no rest for anyone else in the house —no one could go to bed until he knew whether Gerald would live or die, for he was a general favourite, and all liked him. But the man who had injured him stole away like the coward that he is, and from that day to this he has never sent him one word of regret for having absolutely ruined his life."

"Oh, I should like to meet him, and tell him exactly what I think of him," Beatrice exclaimed with a long breath. "He is the meanest scoundrel I ever heard of. There's my aunt," jumping up, "I mustn't keep her waiting or I shall catch it. Thank you so much for your story, I shall never forget it." And she never did.

CHAPER XVI.

TIED FOR LIFE.

ON the way home, Beatrice paid little attention to Lady Malvern's voluble talk, and absolutely broke in upon it on one occasion to ask where Mr. De Winton lived.

The remark was not received kindly. With a frown, the old lady said snappishly, "In London. What is it to you?"

"Only this—I should so like to do something for him—I could go and cheer him up, and if he is fond of music, he might care to hear me sing. Don't you think it might be managed?"

"Certainly not," was the unpromising answer. "Just you leave him alone—and don't interrupt me again. As I was saying—" she plunged again into a narrative connected with a famous racer, and Beatrice, with one look of surprise at her aunt's flushed face, subsided into the position of an uninterested listener. She did not know why, but certainly the visit to Percy's Court had not been a success as far as Lady Malvern was concerned, for her equanimity had been so disturbed that she seemed as if she could not recover it. Immediately on her return she asked for Mr. Townshend-Rivers, in a voice that betokened no good will to that individual.

The golfers had been forced to give up their game early because of the dusk, and most of the men were in the billiard-room, but Mr. Rivers was said to be in his own room writing letters. Lady Malvern when possessed of a piece of her mind that she wished to present to somebody else, had no scruples about disturbing him,

so she ruthlessly sent for him, and gave him the scolding which she imagined that he deserved ; but he took it as placidly as an elephant would a flea-bite.

Beatrice was so full of De Winton's tragic story that she could not get it out of her head. She attacked her husband about it the moment she found herself alone with him. They had both returned to write some necessary letters in the library. At least Falconer meant his wife to write his own share, whilst he stood on the hearth-rug with his hands in his pockets, and dictated the contents at his ease. But the programme was not carried out in any of its details. Unfortunately Lord Falconer had been rubbed the wrong way all the afternoon by Pemberton. Hugh's chief offence was that he understood how to give the ball such an under-spin that he could drive it much further than anyone else. Falconer's huge strength therefore seemed to give him no advantage, and as they trudged over one mile after another his ill-temper was ever on the increase. He had kept it in rather more carefully than usual as he was anxious not to make a fool of himself whilst at Ethelred Hall, but he was feeling on edge and ready to carp and to fret about anything.

"I was told such a dreadful story at Percy's Court," his wife began quietly as she examined the point of her pen. She was as unconscious of any danger in the topic, as a hired messenger, who is given an infernal machine to carry—disguised as a bonnet box. "It is about a Mr. Gerald de Winton."

Lord Falconer made a slight movement, but said nothing.

"He and another man quarrelled about a girl ; and only fancy," her voice deepening with her anger, "the other man who was the meanest, most despicable ruffian——"

"Who told you this story?" he interrupted fiercely.

Startled by his tone, she looked up at him, but could not see his expression because his head came up so far above the shaded lamp.

"Miss Wingfield—a poor old maid, who——"

"D—— all old maids!" he cried savagely, his passion rising like a wave, and the veins on his forehead standing out like thick cords. "And you come to me with this story—in this hypocritical fashion—you call me to my face a despicable ruffian!"

She started up, her face as white as the sheet of paper lying on the writing case. "You—you—I never said a word about you," she

stammered, as a terrible fear shot up like a ghost before her, and nearly dazed her.

"That's a lie, and you know it," he cried, carried beyond all bounds of control, because of the mean suspicion that had got hold of him. "You came home primed with this story, and you brought it out in this sneaky fashion on purpose to insult me."

"You didn't do it! Oh, for God's sake, say you didn't do it," she cried piteously, holding on to the table in front of her, for she was shaking from head to foot, and too much absorbed by the one dread that possessed her to remember to defend herself. What did it matter if he accused her of anything and everything, so long as she knew herself to be innocent, and could imagine him to be free from this hideous sin?

He thought she was only humbugging, and his anger rose to fever heat. "Stop this infernal nonsense," he shouted. "You don't take me in the least bit—you like to have this pull over me, it's so convenient to have something to bring up against me, as if a man never went into a rage before!"

"Oh, Falcon!" clasping her hands, and raising her white face imploringly, "you didn't do it—or if you did," she added inconsequently, as one offence after the other appeared in glaring colours, "you couldn't have slunk away in such a heartless fashion!"

"You think I would have stayed to be hooted at!" he cried with a sneer. "No, thank you. The fellow got in my way, so I sent him out of it, as I will your friend, the Prig—if ever he gives me the chance. You had better look out, you haven't married a weak, blubbering idiot."

"I've married a monster," she said quickly as her utter loathing and disgust flamed from her eyes, "a man without one spark of honour—one feeling proper to a gentleman."

"Hold hard, don't go too far," he interrupted roughly. Then he came forward, and leant upon the writing-table, glaring into her face, more like a wild beast than a man. He had kept himself in for these months, but he was not going to trouble himself to do so any longer. This girl at least was thoroughly in his power, and he meant her to see that he was master. In other words, he was going to enjoy himself for a few minutes, having practised self-denial till he was sick of it.

But there was one man in the house who understood Lord Fal-

coner thoroughly, having had glimpses of him during his stormy boyhood. This was Morris, Lady Malvern's butler and general factotum, and after forty years of faithful service he had grown into a confidential friend rather than a servant. Just as the Marchioness was crossing the hall with the intention of beginning the long labours of her evening toilet, Morris stepped forward, and said respectfully, but apparently *à propos des bottes*, "His Lordship is with her Ladyship in the library."

Lady Malvern understood at once that Beatrice was having a bad time of it. She made her way in that direction as quickly as she could, taking no pains to disguise her limp in her great hurry; and throwing open the door dramatically, she stood for an instant on the threshold taking in the situation at a glance. One look at Beatrice's white, hunted face, as she leant against the wall, with her husband opposite her, was sufficient to tell her that her suspicions were correct.

"Falconer," she said in a tone of command, like a commander-in-chief to his troops. He turned round quickly at the sound of her voice, and took the trouble to change his expression. She went on as if she had noticed nothing unusual. "Will you go and dress, please, and see if you can't be in time for dinner, for once in your life?"

He muttered something which she did not catch, and walked straight out of the room. To run away was habitually easy to him, and he saw that this was the easiest way out of the difficulty.

His poor wife dropped upon the chair from which she had started in the first shock of her surprise. Her clasped hands rested on the table, her small dark head was bowed upon her hands. The hugeness of the calamity which had come upon her crushed her utterly. There was no escape from it. The man whom she loved had never existed. He was simply a creation of her own foolish imagination, and she was tied for life to the monster, who nearly murdered Gerald de Winton!

"Tied for life!" Like an incessant chime the words rung in her ears. "Tied for life."

Lady Malvern stood quite still in the middle of the room, after she had secured herself from intrusion by locking the door. "Domestic tragedies differ from all others, in that they have to be acted in private," she said to herself as she turned the key. But when that

was done she did not know how to follow it up. For almost the first time in her life, standing in that silent room where even the ticking of the ornamental clock seemed aggressive—she did not know either what to say or what to do. She gave an anxious look at that forlorn figure behind the writing-table. There was something of complete surrender, a giving up of all hope, in the pose of that bowed head. To say “Never mind” would be an absurdity—for it was evident that the poor child did mind, and probably would mind to the end of her life. To tell her that “everything was for the best” would be hypocritical, for she herself had the strongest doubts on the subject. To bid her to be resigned and to bear up with christian fortitude would be impossible for *her*, for out of her own experience she knew nothing of resignation, and the utmost she herself had been able to attain to, was a stoical indifference. She had only got so far as that because she was old, and she did not care enough about anything to grieve overmuch.

For a moment she wished that she were quite a different sort of person—like that Miss Kennard for instance. Then she could have flung her arms round the poor creature and fondled her, throwing out an endearing epithet now and then—and that would have been quite sufficient, but endearments were not at all in Lady Malvern’s line. She had been brought up in a hard school, and her kiss was like the peck of a bird, with no more tenderness in it.

Suddenly she advanced towards the writing-table, having made up her mind that a bracing remedy was the best. “The Cliffs were always a rough brutal set from time immemorial, and your husband is about the worst,” she said quietly, as if she were talking indifferent platitudes. “If you had not found it out to-day, you would to-morrow. There is no use in disguising the truth, but there is great harm in publishing it. I shall tell everybody that you have caught cold—lie down on the sofa with your back to the light. Some dinner shall be brought you. You had better eat it—for no heart-ache was ever cured by starvation.”

Beatrice raised her head at this moment and said reproachfully, “Why didn’t you tell me before I married him?”

Lady Malvern looked slightly embarrassed by this awkward question coming in the midst of her sensible advice. “Because if I had, you would never have married him, and I did not want either a barmaid or a ballet-dancer introduced into the family. Selfish—I

don't deny—but it was the only hope for him. I thought you might stop him in his race down-hill. But now you must make the best of a bad business," she was going on soothingly, when she caught sight of the girl's haggard face looking ten years older than it did when they started for that fatal drive. The mere sight of it pulled her up short, and made her counsel seem a mockery. "Don't look like that, child!" she cried with a sort of gasp. "I would do anything in the world for you."

"There is nothing to be done," in a low voice out of which despair had taken all the music. Nothing to be done—and she would not be nineteen till next year! Nobody who cared for her would ever wish her "many happy returns of the day" again. "May you die as soon as ever you can"—that would be the very kindest thing to say. The corners of her pretty mouth took a pitiful droop as she rested her elbows on the table, her weary head on her clasped hands, and thought of her spoilt life.

"Hush! don't talk like that—you will give me a nightmare," Lady Malvern said with a shiver. "There are very few men worth breaking a heart for, and Falconer certainly isn't one of them." Then she looked at her niece wistfully—gave a curious twitch to her lips—went slowly towards the door and unlocked it. Before she opened it she turned round to say, "As soon as the house is quiet get to your room, and I'll send you some chloral," she opened the door and with another backward look went out. "Put off dinner for half an hour," she said to Morris as she passed him. "Lady Falconer's will be served in the library, and will be taken in by her own maid."

"I know what she feels," she said to herself, as she went slowly up the stairs. "She would like to kill him—or herself, probably the latter. On second thoughts, I won't send the chloral."

Presently she met one of her guests descending in full evening-dress, who looked at the Marchioness with open-eyed astonishment. "So sorry, my dear," she said promptly, "but you must blame the evening post." It was not the first time in her life by any means that she had found the evening post a convenient subterfuge, but Mrs. Jocelyn was quite taken in.

"No bad news, I hope," she said politely, and passed on.

(*To be continued.*)

The Ideal House.

By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

IN THE MATTER OF THE BED-ROOMS.

In drawing a series of pictures of the Ideal House, I am, of course, pre-supposing that Edwin and Angelina are starting from the beginning or, if not quite from the beginning, that they are almost making a fresh start.

Now, I wish to point out to my young couple what many people never seem to think of, or systematically to ignore when they set about arranging their home, that the matter of the bed-rooms is a very much more important one than that of any other part of the house. In bygone days—and not so very far gone by either—anything used to be thought good enough for the bed-rooms. If there was one bed-room larger and more important than the others, it was usually kept for “the spare room,” and was only used for occasional visitors, and as a sort of superior work-room. If a dressmaker came for a few days’ work, she was usually located in the spare room, and the great bed served as a table for the frocks and petticoats she was making. Otherwise it remained, with drawn blinds and shrouded furniture unused, unless the lady of the house kept her best dresses in the capacious wardrobe. Sometimes it smelled of lavender—sometimes only musty.

The contrast between the appointments of the spare room and the ordinary bed-rooms was remarkable, and even in these enlightened days one often sees the same thing. I have in my mind’s eye a house planned as a model of the Home Beautiful. The world flocked in hundreds to see the reception rooms, and dozens of articles were written about the picture frames, the walls, the method of lighting, the harmony of the floor coverings, the perfection of everything.

If these rhapsodisers had penetrated into the upstairs regions of this celebrated house, they would, I think, have received a regular electric shock of astonishment, for room after room merited the same description—a howling wilderness. Bare wooden or iron bedsteads, with torn and soiled coverlets, dingy walls, broken chairs, painted washstands, which were almost innocent of paint, cracked crockery, small cloudy looking-glasses, strips of loose carpet, and a fusty smell over every-

thing! Pah! Below-stairs there was a gaping crowd extolling the taste and beauty of the show-rooms, while the children and their parents passed a good half of their lives in these unlovely and comfortless surroundings.

For Edwin and Angelina should remember that a good half of their lives will be passed not in the white and gold drawing-room, not in the oak-furnished dining-room, but in the bed-rooms. It is far more important to have a lofty and airy bed-room than to have those attributes for the room in which you eat your meals. Nothing can be so bad both for health and for temperament, as to sleep in a small, stuffy, ill-ventilated room, crowded with furniture and filled with articles discarded from the more often seen parts of the house. For, as I say, more than half our lives is passed in our bed-rooms. Most of the important events of life come about there: we are generally born in them, and most of us die in them. Take the case of an ordinary Angelina. She goes to bed at midnight—she rises in time for a nine o'clock breakfast, or possibly not till an hour later still. Of her daylight hours she will spend not less than two hours in her bed-room, occupied in dressing or resting—that means at least eleven out of the twenty-four, and that too when she is in perfect health. In no other room of the house does she spend as long a time, nor ever as long a time at one spell as during the unbroken hours of sleep.

I have heard people say that, when one is asleep, it does not matter what kind of a room one is in. Nonsense! One must sleep better in a large, fresh, dainty room, than in a small, stuffy one. And if it doesn't so much matter what the appearance of a room is while one is asleep, it most emphatically does matter what kind of a looking room one wakes in. And again, in times of illness, how important that the eyes and the senses shall be soothed by pleasant and cheerful surroundings. I know a distinguished painter whose wife is a somewhat delicate woman, who pretty often has to spend a few days in bed. With this fact in view, he has furnished her bedroom in very special manner, the tone of the whole being a soft deep green, all the woodwork and furniture exactly in the same tone. The panels of every door are painted with charming landscapes, pictures, flower pieces, everything which can tend to make the room restful without dullness. There is a special little door, too, leading into the lovely drawing-room, so that she can pass from one room to the other without the fatigue of mounting a few steps, which lie in the ordi-

nary way, or fear of taking a chill from the colder air of the staircase.

Personally, however, this style of bed-chamber does not please me. I like my bedroom to be very large, and to have several good-sized windows. I prefer dark red linen blinds to shade the room, and for the lower half of the windows, I like tightly drawn blinds of gay coloured muslin. I detest hangings of any kind whatever in a bedroom, but like to see the tops of the windows finished off with a brass or black and gold curtain-pole.

I like a gas-light on either side of the dressing-glass; and here, I may say that I consider electric light in a bed-room simply detestable. To dress for the evening by electric light is most disagreeable, for it always sends you out into the world with a conviction firmly planted in your mind that you are the ugliest human being that ever lived. It is the fashion to sneer at gas, to declare that sensitive natures can not exist under its baneful influence, that it ruins all decorations and deals death and destruction everywhere. It may be so; I know that it never hurt me, and that I infinitely prefer it to the electric light, to tiresome and dangerous lamps, or expensive, troublesome candles.

In every bed-room there should be at least three lights, one on either side of the dressing-table, and with an arm a-piece, so that the lights can be moved to and fro at will; the third one should be placed at the head of the bed, so that the occupant shall be able to read in comfort and without any strain to the eyes.

Some people turn up hands and eyes in horror at the very mention of such a habit, but I must confess that I cannot see where the harmfulness of it comes in. For my own part I *always* read in bed, and if I go to bed at three or four in the morning, I still have a soothing five minutes' reading.

Of course, with careless people who fall asleep over a book and let the candle topple over on to the bed-clothes and shrivel them to a cinder, one can only feel that they deserve all they get, but in such a case as mine, it is a very different thing. If I stay up until I am dead tired, I find that undressing serves to thoroughly arouse me, and I get into bed feeling so wide awake, and yet weary, that I can only toss and turn during the greater part of the night. But if I go to bed as soon as I feel just comfortably tired and settle myself for half an hour's quiet reading, I feel that I am resting my limbs and composing my nerves at one and the same time. I

therefore read till I get sleepy, and then put out my light, snuggle down among my pillows, and am asleep in a jiffy.

Of course Angelina will have to see that her servants do not indulge too much in this particular habit. As a rule their nerves do not trouble them much, and they sleep much more readily than we do. Fortunately accidents from this cause are not many. As a matter of fact, I never remember in my own experience but one case of fire from a servant's leaving her candle alight by her bedside. It happened in this way: A few years ago we imported a French maid for our children. She was fresh-caught from her native town, a beautiful young creature, golden blonde and sunburned, with a profile like the head of the French Republic, which you may see on the coins of France to-day. She was fairly educated, and spoke good French; but she was an unmitigated hussy who would not keep her fasts, would not follow her mother's behests, and who for seven weeks gave us an infinitude of anxiety and trouble and only one bit of amusement by way of set-off.

That, by-the-bye, was one day when my boy Bootles, whom she dearly loved at first sight, was sitting on her knee, when she suddenly clasped him in a violent hug, crying: "Oh! Monsieur Boo-cloose (*all* French servants call Bootles, Boo-cloose), comme je t'adore!" The boy, who then knew not one word of French, got down from her knee and ran to the door. But finding it shut, he turned to her indignantly. "How can I shut the door when it is shut?" he demanded—then added one disgusted word by way of comment: "Silly!"

But to my muttions. This damsel retired to bed one night, and was an hour later discovered fast asleep by the parlourmaid, her rosary and her "Garden of the Soul" in her hand, and the candle, which for some wholly unexplained reason, she had taken out of the candlestick and set on the table-cover, burned down to the polished wood of the dressing-table. We promptly presented the young lady with a ticket for home, and saw her off *en route* thereto two days later; but seriously I don't think that her narrow chance of burning our house down can justly be set down to "reading in bed."

Still, I set out to write an article on the furnishing of bed-rooms, and am wandering shamefully away from my point. Let us go back to our bed-rooms and wander no more! Garrulity is the greatest drawback of writing chit-chat; one writes on and writes on, like some of

the parsons drone on in the pulpit, knowing that no one can answer or interrupt there and then. Forgive me this time, I beg.

So to our bed-rooms. Well, my good Edwin and Angelina, take my advice and make your sleeping rooms as bright and gay as you possibly can. Have nice clean ceilings, clean fresh walls of a bright colour, and for absolute comfort an asbestos gas fire. Don't have any mysterious arrangements which you do not understand, but see that in the bottom of your fire-grate you have a perforated fire-brick gas holder (I don't know the technical name for this), and then that the whole grate is filled with lumps of asbestos. There must be an air tube going somewhere up the chimney ; and a nice trivet and kettle. Then you are independent by day and by night both for heat and hot water. The comfort of a properly laid gas fire is incalculable. If you are dressing for the evening, you need only light it while you are actually in the room. Your maid can light it and turn it down low the last thing before she goes to bed, and when you come home from your party or dance, you have your room warm and cosy, and can make a cup of tea in five minutes. If you are ill you can burn a gas fire for weeks and you can keep the room *to a degree* in temperature with care in regulating the gas taps. A basin of water set inside the fender prevents any smell, and a bronchitis kettle will keep steaming just as long as you choose.

For the carpet of a bed-room, I prefer of all others a good Wilton ; next to that, a good Brussels. I like the carpet to be fitted to the room. I loathe bed-valances, but like a large white quilt or smart bed-spread for day use ; each may be taken off at night.

Personally, I prefer the dressing-table to have a marble top like the wash-stand, not white, no, not white, for that has a look of the graveyard about it ; it should either be red or gray. I like to see lots of pretty things on a lady's dressing-table : silver, ivory, ebony, it matters little which, so long as they are kept clean and tidy. Cut-glass bottles, Limoges toilet sets, Cloisonné jars and boxes ; even the cheap and humble ivorine or xylonite, all tend to show that the room is the chamber of a dainty lady.

There should be no flowers in a bedroom, beyond at most a couple of vases on the dressing-table. As to the actual furniture—well, it is immaterial whether it is of costly wood or of dainty enamel. See that it is firm and solid, and that it gives room for all necessities. Have a firmly standing table beside the bed, and a couple of comfortable easy

chairs; and if the room is large, a cosy couch. A waste-paper basket or smartly painted box for odds and ends of rubbish is a comfort, and a couple of pretty wall cupboards, one for medicines, and one for little toilet necessaries, are essential. Have as many bright pictures as you like, and always, dear Angelina, bear in mind that half an hour of morning sunshine is worth more than two hours of air in the later half of the day.

(*To be continued.*)

Nurse Hyde's Experiences.

By J. BARRETT-KNOX.

SWIFTLY as the train sped upon its way towards Zoughton, the thoughts of Elizabeth Hyde travelled at an even faster rate. Back in an instant to the starting point of her journey did her memory flash, contrasting her past life with the unknown future before her.

She realised that the coming change in her outward *environment* would certainly prove what was "her inward capability of action," and that although to herself she would remain the same, to others her past individuality had vanished with fortune and home.

She felt like a picture torn out of its frame: an "old master" turned with its face to the wall, and looked upon as a mere sketch amongst the many hundreds of similar canvasses in the world's picture gallery.

The engine slackened speed, and Elizabeth collected her parcels.

"Exit Miss Hyde, of Hyde Abbey and Belgrave Square," she murmured, nodding an imaginary farewell to the empty compartment, "Enter Nurse Hyde, one of the probationers in ordinary to the inmates of Zoughton Infirmary."

She stepped from the train and looked back along the line, then with a final good-bye to the past, turned towards the crowd surrounding the luggage van.

An active little American had seized upon one of the few available porters, and Elizabeth saw her own trunk rapidly borne out of the station and placed upon a dusty fly.

As she claimed her property, there was an amused twinkle in the eyes of the energetic New Yorker.

"I guess that's British diplomacy," she exclaimed. "Have I pulled all your chestnuts out of the fire? No, don't thank me. Here comes my pile!" And away she darted, leaving Elizabeth to enter the fly, and be driven away, through the pine woods and over the common to the entrance of Zoughton Infirmary.

Josiah, the hall porter, quickly made her realise her position, as he bade her curtly "Wait, while he sent for the assistant matron."

His messenger soon returned, followed by a tall, thin person, whose list shod feet made no sound, and who walked with her body inclined at a forward angle, which seemed to increase the giraffe-like length of her neck.

The sideways carriage of the smooth head, as she seemingly used only one eye at a time, gave the curious impression that she was dumb and straining every nerve to catch each passing sound.

Miss Jeune had been assistant matron for nine years, and her *soubriquet* amongst the nurses suited her exactly. "Creeping Jenny" she had been dubbed after the eventful night, when, to test the nerves of an excitable Irish probationer, she had glided from her room and approached Nurse O'Hara, in the dark corridor at two o'clock one winter morning, lightly clad in a white dressing gown. The nerves, not only of Nurse O'Hara, but of all the patients and nurses within scream, were tested, for after one startled yell, the terrified girl dropped the tray she was carrying, tumbled backwards down a flight of shallow stairs, and went into hysterics upon the mat at the bottom!

Miss Jeune approached Elizabeth, and in a soft, husky voice said :

"Nurse Hyde, I suppose? Your train must have been late, as it is past six o'clock. Come upstairs and I will show you your cubicle. The matron will see you to-morrow morning."

Elizabeth climbed five flights of stairs, and walked along five corridors. At the end of the fifth was her room.

Each cubicle contained a bed, a chair, a table, and a washing stand, also a chest of drawers with a small looking glass upon it. The partition walls did not reach the ceiling by two feet, and the window of the centre cubicle ventilated the apartment on either side. A terribly draughty arrangement in cold weather.

"When you have put on your cap and apron, you can come down stairs to the dining hall, where we have supper at eight o'clock."

Nurse Elizabeth took the starched disc and apron from Miss Jeune, and after her departure, tried to reduce the stiffened linen to a wearable shape. She twisted and pleated and shook it, until a voice came over the partition :

"Is that a new probationer, wrestling with a new cap?"

"It is," sighed Elizabeth, "at least it was a new cap a few minutes ago."

"Bring it to me, and I will show you how to arrange it."

Pushing open the door, Elizabeth saw Nurse O'Brien, whose dark eyes were dancing with fun, as she held out a slender hand, saying :

"I have been on night duty. Don't apologise for waking me, it is not your fault, but the scientific arrangement of this most enlightened hospital. The nurses off night duty sleep next door to the nurses on day duty, and as you will notice, the chapel harmonium lulls us to rest whenever a daily service or practice is going on. These cubicles are just above the chapel, and you can hear most of the service." While she spoke, her clever fingers had evolved a shapely cap from the crumpled linen. "Now bend your tall back. How it will ache by the end of the week. Ahem! Nurse Clytie in a night-cap! Mrs. Wyles will be charmed to see how well it suits you. Unfortunately your hair is thick and ripples naturally, for Creeping Jenny likes all our heads to be as smooth as her own, and 'the cap to rest upon the brow.' I am just going to dress, for the night nurses have hot dinner at eight o'clock, and go on duty at half past."

"How many patients do you have charge of in your ward?" Elizabeth asked.

"I have twenty-two now, and four of them are in the 'special.' It seems easy work after my last year at L—— Infirmary, where I had thirty-two beds, and no one to help me at night, unless a patient died, and then the night sister came in. As all the patients had to be washed and made ready for breakfast, before the two day nurses came on duty at seven o'clock, I had to begin washing the poor things at three or four o'clock in the morning! Most of them were very patient and uncomplaining, although I really agreed with one old woman who said, 'Taint a bad place to bide in, when one gets accustomed to the discomfort of the cleanliness!' Now hurry, or you will be late for supper."

Elizabeth found the dining hall on the third floor : it was a long, narrow room, in the centre of which stood a very long table. Here were seated fifteen sisters and nurses.

Miss Jeune waved Elizabeth to a vacant place, and proceeded to carve the cold leg of mutton, and dispense the fresh herrings; a sister at the other end of the table poured out the coffee, which Elizabeth handed on to her neighbours.

By the time she had tasted and shuddered at the fish, which was fresh only in name, nearly half the allotted fifteen minutes had departed, and but eight remained in which to consume the hot bread pudding which was next served out. Elizabeth could not follow the example of her nearest neighbour, who poured cold water into her plate and then finished her supper.

Hungry she had sat down, and hungry she went to bed, but during the next few days realised that a good supper could generally be obtained if she avoided fish, and chose the excellent and well-cooked meat and puddings. Many of the nurses were able to capture slices of bread and cheese, and eat them while the supper was being cleared away, and the room made ready for prayers; for punctually at eight fifteen Miss Jeune rose from the table, and dismissed the first supper party, who waited in their cubicles or round the dining hall, while the second supper was served for those who had been in the wards until the night nurses came on duty. Prayers followed at nine o'clock.

After a good night, Nurse Hyde was down to breakfast at six forty-five. The fare was not sumptuous—tea and coffee, and plenty of bread. In front of each nurse stood a small china dish containing what remained of her weekly half-pound of butter, and to each table of fifteen hungry women did Miss Jeune dispense one tin of sardines. After breakfast Elizabeth had an interview with the matron, and quite lost her heart to the sweet face and pleasant voice which greeted her.

Then followed her introduction to the men's medical ward. Julia, the ward-maid, handed her over to the sister ; and her first task was to finish polishing all the brass-work on the windows and "lockers."

While she rubbed, Elizabeth glanced down the ward; the ten beds on either side were occupied, and some of the patients looked very ill, one man especially with a fever-flushed face, was tossing to and fro. The sister watched him for a few minutes until called off to the

other end of the room, when she left a probationer by the sick man, telling her to turn his pillows and keep the clothes over him.

At this minute the house-surgeon came to the bedside and asked :

"What is the temperature, nurse?"

"I don't know, sir," replied the little probationer, who, like Elizabeth, was on duty for the first time in her life.

"Don't know!" echoed the doctor, "take it at once, put the thermometer in his mouth."

Turning to the next bed, Dr. Ormerod left Nurse Rollin in helpless bewilderment, the only thermometer she had ever seen was the large zinc one, with which the sister had shortly before taken the temperature of a bath.

To hear was to obey. Nurse Rollin fetched the instrument, and timidly advancing to the patient, whispered :

"Open your mouth."

The man stared, and ejaculated gruffly, "'Twouldn't go in if I did."

"Open your mouth, *please*," the little pro. entreated. "The doctor said you were to."

The man shook his head, and held the sheet firmly in both hands.

By this time several of the patients were interested spectators, and were sitting up in bed watching.

Dr. Ormerod turned round. "Well, nurse, what is the temperature?"

"He won't let me take it."

"Not have his temperature taken! Nonsense, my man, open your mouth at once."

The patient obeyed, and Nurse Rollin once more timidly advanced the huge bath thermometer.

"Good heavens, nurse!" ejaculated the doctor.

Poor little pro. ! The shout of laughter from the other beds quite overcame her, and she burst into tears, as the sister hurried back and explained. This probationer made a first-rate nurse in the end, though for weeks she had to run the gauntlet of the patients' chaff, when they implored her to "take their tempers"—half a dozen times a day. The wards at Zoughton Infirmary were very bright, and in the centre of each stood three tables, with pretty cloths and tall pots of ferns and flowers upon them. The lockers on either side of the ward were covered with an array of porringer and vulcanite

trays for holding dressings, or for making poultices in, etc., etc. The Turkey red quilts on the beds and the scarlet jackets of the patients were very picturesque—and the beautifully polished parquet floors and shining brass beds and locker handles gave evidence of cleanliness and thoroughly good management. As the days passed Elizabeth grew accustomed to the long hours of standing, stooping, and lifting.

Her work commenced at seven o'clock, when all patients had to be washed, and beds made. At nine the ward sister read prayers, and half an hour later, luncheon of soup, or milk, and bread was served out, before the house surgeon made his rounds. The mid-day meal consisted of hot meat, vegetables and milk puddings for those who were not on special diet of soup or fish. One long table was always kept clear, and upon this the white cloth was laid. Here the food was cut up so that the patients got it quickly and hot, instead of its being carried from the ward kitchens. Afternoon tea was at four, and supper of milk, soup, cocoa and bread, at seven. Evening prayers were read at eight, and the lights were lowered directly afterwards. In the accident ward the night nurse had often time to get through a good deal of needlework, as she sat by the fire with a shaded lamp, but in the medical ward the patients generally kept her trotting to and fro, and at four o'clock she had to begin breakfast preparations in the ward kitchen, cutting piles of bread and butter, and arranging the trays and bed tables for each patient who was well enough to feed himself. Some convalescents were able to get up and dress by six o'clock, and they helped the nurse boil the eggs, make the tea and take round the breakfast trays. The ward had to be quite tidy and all food cleared away into the kitchen by seven o'clock.

There were many duties which seemed strange to Elizabeth at first, but perhaps one of her greatest trials was the loss of her bath-room. After twelve hours standing her feet and limbs ached wearily, and she asked the nurse in the cubicle next her own, to show her the bath-room.

Nurse Brown laughed, and opened a door opposite the stairs.

"I thought this was a store room!" said Elizabeth.

"So it is; you see Mrs. Wyles finds it a convenient place to keep the apples in, and the heating apparatus has been out of order for six months. So although the nurses are supposed to have the

luxury of a bath-room, as a matter of fact we have to carry our water up from the kitchen, whenever we wish for a hot bath. It does not so much matter in the summer, cold water is refreshing, but in the winter it is no joke."

"How is it that the members of the Infirmary Board have not found out such mismanagement?"

"Because there are more things in Heaven and earth *and* in Zough-ton Infirmary than are dreamt of in their philosophy! If there was only one woman on the committee, she would have found out many things that require altering, but during the two years that I have been here, the members of the Board act like well regulated automatons. Mr. A—— invariably arrives at tea time on the first Monday in each month. It is his day to-morrow, and you will hear Creeping Jenny say 'Make the tea a little stronger to-day nurse,' for a teacup is the only object he inspects.

"On Wednesday Colonel B—— always calls, and his mania is *cobwebs*. He strolls in with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling and corners, and observes nothing upon a lower level.

"On Thursday beware of having a scrap of soiled linen in any of the ward baskets, for Mr. C—— opens every lid, and never appears to realise that the ward-maid may have carried off all the contents a few hours before, and that soiled linen has to remain in the basket until the nurse has time to remove it. If you hear Mr. C—— coming, run with your basket to the bath-room and hide it, or you will have a ward lecture for half an hour on atmospheric impurities engendered by storing soiled linen amongst your patients! Nurse O'Hara has been here for nearly three years, and when she departs, if she only has a chance of an interview with the Board, *after* she has obtained her certificate from Mrs. Wyles she will try and get the bath put right for us." Poor Nurse O'Hara her merry Irish nature had endeared her to all the other nurses and patients, but before her time had expired, her health began to break down, and, after a particularly trying case of typhoid, which she nursed devotedly for eighteen weeks, she was seen one day flying across the common towards the town in such an excited state, that it was at once apparent that her mind was affected. She fortunately met Nurse Maitland, who persuaded her to get into a passing fly and return to the Infirmary. There was some method in her madness, for when she entered the hall she knelt upon the stones and loudly

and solemnly prayed Heaven to remove all the abuses which had hitherto been unknown to the committee.

In vain the matron and Miss Jeune and the house surgeon endeavoured to get her upstairs. Two members of the Board were also present, and Nurse O'Hara's ravings enlightened them, and the house surgeon, about much that had hitherto gone on unknown and unchecked. The merry little Irish nurse was seen no more in the wards, for her strength was too exhausted to fight against the brain fever that supervened, and she passed away after only a week's illness.

A few days afterwards, when Nurse Elizabeth was on duty, the sister called her to help prepare a bed for an accident. It is a case of attempted suicide, the telegram says. An Italian jumped overboard as his ship entered Zoughton harbour! The man soon arrived; he was tall and elderly, with thickly curling grey hair and fine aquiline features.

After a few minutes the sister looked at Nurse Elizabeth, and whispered, "What shall we do! It is a woman. Go and tell the house surgeon at once."

The men in the ward next saw the unconscious figure carried past the screens that had surrounded the bed, and concluded the new comer was so ill that he was going into a special small ward. Neither they nor the woman in the ward where the insensible patient was placed knew of the tragedy thus being played out.

After some hours the Italian looked round with a bewildered gaze past one of the screens which had shifted; she caught sight of the occupants of the other beds, and exclaimed: "What have you done! I am a man, and should not be here!"

Nurse Elizabeth bent over her and said gently, "Your secret is discovered, but you are with friends who will take care of you."

After one agonised exclamation of "*Don't betray me!*" the Italian relapsed into a despairing silence, from which no words of kindness could rouse her. She refused to speak again, except once, when she asked for her pipe. She smoked silently, or lay with her dark eyes gazing into the future, but no one in the hospital could induce her to open her lips, and at the end of ten days she passed silently away with death, into the country where all secrets are revealed to Him who knows and understands. Amongst the papers found in her pocketbook, were testimonials from well known Europeans, with

whom she had travelled for fifty years. As "Luigi the Courier" she was well known, but no one had discovered her sex, nor was the reason ever found out which had made her assume the disguise of a man when only seventeen years old. Unknown she had lived, and in silence she died, having been driven by the agony of a mortal disease to seek death, rather than have her secret discovered. Her papers were sent to the Italian Consul, but no clue to her identity was ever obtained. The weeks and months passed and Elizabeth's year of probationership had expired; she found the work absorbingly interesting, and in the characters of the patients a never ending study, while the kindness and skill of the doctors taught her many a lesson, and won the gratitude of even the roughest inmates.

"If you please, gentlemen," said a poor woman one day, who had been cruelly injured in a threshing machine, and whose right leg the doctors feared must be amputated, "If you *please* gentlemen, I came into the world with two legs, and please God I will go out of the world with both of them." She pleaded effectually, and finally recovered, although the injured leg was of no use again, and she had to walk with crutches until the day of her death. The patients tried to show their gratitude in various ways, and Nurse Elizabeth was much touched by the would-be kindness of an old cabman, who, when leaving the ward, slipped twopence into her hand, as he thanked her for her care of him.

A curious mishap befel the surgeons one day. The theatre was at the top of the building, and as usual the doctors stepped into the lift, and were started off by the porter, who then went back to the outer hall. The lift stuck in the shaft half way up, and remained there for an hour, the nurses in the operating room imagining that something unusual was detaining the surgeons downstairs, and the porter believing that they had ascended to the sixth floor as usual and had let themselves out. Fortunately no phonograph was attached to the lift to record the conversation of the prisoners—it is sufficient to say that when discovered and released, their mental temperatures had risen far above the normal, and in fact had reached boiling point!

Nurse Elizabeth was now in the women's surgical ward, and was much struck by the wonderful cheerfulness of the patients, compared with the women in the medical wards; the latter were generally patient and uncomplaining, but became more quickly depressed than

the surgical cases. Here the observations she had made during her parish visiting at home were confirmed, and she constantly realised that to the suffering poor this world seems but a temporary dwelling-place, and Heaven the goal of happiness which they truly desire to reach. That others realise it too, who are naturally more reticent, was shown one day when a girl was brought into the hospital by her husband and her mother. She had been frightfully injured by a runaway horse, and the house surgeon quickly saw the case was nearly hopeless. He explained to the husband that an operation might save her life, but he feared the worst.

" You know best, sir, save her for me if you can," was the answer, " and don't keep me away longer than you must."

Ten minutes passed, but not even Dr. O——'s skill, nor the help of the other surgeons present availed. She was sinking, and an operation would not save her, was their conclusion. Her husband was brought into the theatre as she recovered consciousness.

With perfect calmness she gazed at the doctors and nurses, and whispered, " I am dying, pray for me please doctor."

Dr. O—— glanced at the faces round him, then quietly knelt and prayed aloud until the end came peacefully.

He had given many lessons in the theatre, but, by neither nurses nor students, was that day's teaching ever forgotten.

(To be continued.)

Leaves from our Trysting Place.

I plucked a leaf in the early spring,

So tender, and fresh, and sweet,

It ' minded me of the voice's ring

Of one I was wont to meet.

I plucked a leaf in the autumn time,

Its tints were mellowed, and ripe,

It ' minded me of a form in its prime

Of womanhood's noblest type.

I plucked a leaf in the wintry blast,

Its surface was cover'd with snow,

It ' minded me of one lov'd to the last,

Of white locks that now lie low.

PENELOPE GRAHAM.

Purification versus Putrefaction.

By P. B.

"SMOOTH your way to the head through the heart," was Lord Chesterfield's wise advice to his son, and where an appeal to reason and sentiment is involved, it is well to grapple with the sentimental side of the question, before bringing reason to bear on the subject. The long association of habit and custom with the prevailing method of disposing of the lifeless forms of those we love, is still so powerful a factor to the hindrance of health and progress, that it may come as a surprise to many to hear that the old Germanic custom of burning the bodies of the dead, prevailed at one time in England, as testified by the urns discovered in various parts of Great Britain, most numerous near Stonehenge. In the Heroic ages cremation was largely practiced by the Greeks, both in Europe and Asia Minor, while later the practice was continued even when burial had also become common. Their great law-giver, Solon, was cremated by his own express wish. Although the early Christians were adverse to burning, and adopted burial, in this they merely followed the custom of the Jews, who always buried their dead, with a few notable exceptions, as that of Saul and his sons, who were burnt by the men of Jabesh-Gilead; and in certain cases to honour their kings, as recorded in Jeremiah xxxiv—v.

The books of the New Testament contain no injunctions as to the disposal of the dead, and those who, in the face of science, still fondly cherish the idea that the same body will rise from the grave, composed of the same identical particles, utterly disregard St. Paul's explicit statement, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." "We sow *not* that body that *shall* be." But no doubt the idea that cremation has a tendency to undermine the doctrine of the Resurrection, still lingers. This is due, however, not to excess of fervent faith and zeal, as might be supposed, but to want of faith, as the Rev. R. Usher, of the Church of England, has so forcibly pointed out. In his lecture on the subject at Ventnor, he told his audience, "Our real objection to Cremation is because our faith in the Resurrection is feeble. Men do not like to think the bodily form

disappears (though, by the way, this it does in any case). If we believe that the soul is the form of the body, remaining, though the matter of the body is dispersed, the identical atoms of iron and carbon need not be restored by a needless miracle. . . . We have already taken into ourselves atoms which may have formed part of our ancestors or the Pharaohs." Yet in spite of the spread of knowledge, and even of St. Paul's own assertion, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," christian sentiment still pre-disposes many minds to prefer inhumation for the simple reason that Christ was buried, utterly ignoring the fact that this can in no way touch the question, as all Christians, whether Church or Chapel-goers, believe that Christ rose again the third day, and that His flesh never saw corruption. Nor was His body nailed into a coffin, and lowered into a pit, euphemistically termed grave, which is the fate of all those who are now committed to the earth. And what a ghastly fate awaits their bodies there, in what sorrowing relatives love to call "their last resting place."

Last resting place, indeed! How little do the bereaved ones realize that so far from the grave being their last resting place, it is only a temporary repository for the forms of those they love. The law permits the re-opening and excavation of graves at the expiration of fourteen years, for the reception of other bodies, and yet the chairman of the Manchester Crematorium, Mr. Henry Simon, C.E., has stated that "the period of *entire* decomposition of a body is certainly not *under* fifty years." But as the law stands, anyone who has not the wherewithal to purchase a grave in perpetuity, is liable, nay, almost certain, to have his or her remains dug up at the end of the legal period, to make room for other bodies. So crowded are the graveyards in all large cities, that it is a common occurrence—in that part of the cemetery where paupers are buried—for twenty or thirty coffins to be placed in one grave, with only a foot of earth between each. Little wonder is it, that amongst the poor there is a wide-spread dread of a pauper's funeral, and many a poor woman will stint and deny herself the very necessities of life, if haply she may put by enough to guard against this unhappy fate. "What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve for," is surely the only sentiment which permits the survivors to commit the bodies of those they once fondly cherished, to be the food for worms and other creeping crawling things, instead of reverently consigning the

empty shell to the purifying action of the flames, which do not even touch the body, but by the draught of intense heat that passes over the corpse, dissolves it in about the space of an hour, sometimes less, to a handful of pure ashes. These may afterwards be buried in the usual way without injury to the living, or if preferred may be carefully preserved in an urn. Since it is a law of nature that the body, when the animating spirit of life has left it, must be dissolved into its constituent elements, why prolong an unspeakably gruesome process over a long period of years, and consign the body to slow and horrible corruption, when the same result, minus the putrefaction, may be arrived at expeditiously without the terrible results that attend earth burial. Apart from this consideration, the perils of premature interment have filled the bravest hearts with fear, and not without good reason, for the only certain sign of death is one which the survivors never wait for—decomposition. This is very evident from the paper read by Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson before the Medical Society of London, a few years ago, on "The Absolute Signs and Proofs of Death;" he mentions several cases that came under his own personal notice, of persons who presented every appearance of death and yet lived. After enumerating no less than eleven signs of death, he sums up by saying, "*If all these signs point to death; if there be no signs of respiratory function; if there be no signs of movement of the pulse or heart, and no sounds of the heart; if the veins of the hand do not enlarge on the distal side of the fillet; if the blood in the veins contains a coagulum; if the galvanic stimulus fails to produce muscular contraction; if the injection of ammonia causes a dirty brown blotch, the evidence may be considered conclusive that death is absolute.*"

Yet in spite of these numerous tests, which he puts forward as conclusive evidence, he adds, "*If these signs leave any doubt, or even if they leave no doubt, one further point of practice should be carried out. The body should be kept in a room, the temperature of which has been raised to 84 deg. Fahr., with moisture diffused through the air; and in this warm and moist atmosphere it should remain until distinct indications of putrefactive decomposition has set in.*"

What does all this amount to, but the statement that nothing short of putrefaction can be regarded as certain evidence of death? If so

many tests alone afford positive proof of death, it is evident that under the existing system of death certification, where in numerous cases no doctor has been in attendance prior to the supposed mortality, or even seen the deceased, and the Registrar is informed of the event by a friend or relative, the risk of premature burial is terribly increased. Yet that this is by no means an unusual procedure is borne out by the report of the Registrar-General, for of those who died in England and Wales in the year 1892, he reports 15,000 cases of burial without a medical certificate, a number equivalent to 3 per cent. on the total returns of the year, to which must be added another 25,000, or 5 per cent., whose deaths were reported as "so inadequately certified as not to be classifiable." Under these circumstances it could only be expected that the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, with Sir Walter Foster, M.D., as chairman, appointed by Mr. Asquith in 1893 to enquire into these matters, should have proved far from reassuring. They reported that the evidence as to the class of uncertified deaths (3 per cent.) is "such as to force upon your Committee the conviction that vastly more deaths occur annually from foul play and criminal neglect than the law recognises." Even the class of certified deaths they found did not bear investigation, as summed up in their statement "that so far as affording a record of the *true cause* of death, and the detection of it in cases where deaths may have been due to violent poison or criminal neglect is concerned, the class of certified deaths leaves much to be desired."

The case of the girl Clover, who was poisoned in 1892, although her death was certified as due to natural causes, is an instance in point. The physician who gave the certificate, a thoroughly qualified practitioner, had never seen the girl, but accepted the statements made to him without any inquiry, and this is quite a common occurrence where the poorer classes are concerned. And yet the only rational objection urged against cremation has been the supposed facility it offers for the concealment of crime. But what are the facts of the case? In Dr. Cameron's address to Parliament in 1884, when introducing the bill for the "Disposal of the Dead," he points out the fallacy of imagining that should suspicion arise as to cause of death *after* burial, all that is required is the exhumation of the body. He told the House of Commons, "It is quite true that certain poisons can be discovered in buried remains for months and years after death, but the most subtle organic and vegetable poisons, and even some of the

elementary poisons, such as phosphorus, themselves participate in the decay of their victim in the grave, and some of them so rapidly, that in a very brief space of time all trace of them disappears." So that he rightly argues "the lesson of all this is the supreme importance from a medico-legal point of view of a prompt verification of the cause of death." And he calls attention to the provision made in France and Germany for ascertaining the true cause of death. In these countries it is the duty of a State-appointed Surgeon in all large cities to examine the dead, and in Paris and some other towns his written permit is required before the body can be removed. Dr. Cameron concluded his lucid and exhaustive speech, advocating Cremation under supervision, by the clinching argument that, "So far as the destruction of evidences of poisoning is concerned, the difference between cremation and inhumation, is simply one of degree. As to mineral poisons, direct experiments instituted by M. Cadet and repeated by MM. Dourvault and Worst, have proved that the salts of arsenic and all other vegetable poisons, except mercury, which is completely volatilised, can be detected in the ashes after cremation. As to organic poisons, most, if not all of them, are destroyed by putrefaction, though of course more slowly than by fire. But what is wanted to ensure their detection is prompt verification of the cause of death."

The President of the Cremation Society of England, Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S., M.B., London, states that as regards the danger of mistaking unconsciousness for death, "with cremation *no such catastrophe could ever occur*," as "the guarantee against this danger would be doubled, since the inspection of the entire body must of necessity *immediately precede the act of cremation*, no such inspection being possible under the present system of burial."

It may not be generally known that no cremation ever takes place without two certificates from duly qualified medical men as to the cause of death, one, at least, of whom *must* have attended the deceased.

The cost of an ordinary middle-class funeral has been estimated by Sir Henry Thompson as not less than £10, inclusive of the coffin, funeral carriages, digging of grave, and in fact all the expenses incurred for interment, with the exception of the conveyance of the body, which of course would be the same whether the remains were cremated or buried. The cost of cremating a body at Woking is at present £5, including a simple urn for the preservation

of the ashes ; but at the Manchester Crematorium a reduced scale of £2 2s. has been adopted for the working classes and persons of limited means. At Woking the cost could also be reduced if incineration became more general, for the furnace now has to be heated specially for each single cremation. In Paris, where eleven or twelve incinerations take place daily, the expense of fuel is very materially reduced, and Professor Gorini has calculated that it would only entail a nominal cost of a few shillings if it were largely practised.

But altogether apart from the economic advantages of incineration, the dangers to the living from the dead under the present method is of supreme gravity. To leave a dead body to rot on the surface of the ground would be judged a disgrace to any civilised community, but to consign it to putrify in the grave with a few feet of earth thrown over it, is still the common practice. And since the process of rotting underground extends over a period of twenty years in the case of adult bodies, Dr. Edmund Parkes' (Professor of Military Hygiene at the Army Medical School at Netley) conclusion is inevitable. He asserts that "burying in the ground appears certainly the most insanitary plan of the three methods," namely, burial in the earth, or at sea, or burning. "The air over the cemeteries," he adds, "is constantly contaminated, and water which may be used for drinking is often highly impure. Hence, in the vicinity of graveyards, two dangers to the population arise, and in addition, from time to time, the disturbance of an old graveyard has given rise to disease."

In 1874, Tooting Cemetery was the subject of an official investigation. It was then found that the *entire* drainage of the cemetery was discharged into the river Wandle by means of a ditch, and many of the inhabitants drew their water supplies from the polluted river. But Tooting Cemetery is not more defective in sanitation than Kensal Green, Highgate, Norwood, and Brompton, which were all condemned by the Board of Health in 1850, and declared to be unfit for further burial. In spite of this emphatic condemnation, all of them are still in use, and in Dr. Sutherland's Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, he asserts that "the only cemetery company which combines in its practice a proper regard to public *health* and *decency* is the London Necropolis Company." But of course it is only a question of time before their large burying ground of 2,000 acres also becomes overcrowded, although now it is exclusively reserved for the dead of London only.

It is time, therefore, that public attention should be called to the matter, and that the remarks made by the Prince of Wales on the subject should be borne in mind. He recommended that : "In view of the rapidly increasing population of the kingdom, the present system of the burial of the dead, should be exchanged for one more in accordance with the requirements of the age, and the sanitary interests of the community."

Do the Dead Return ?

By JANET A. McCULLOCH.

CHAPTER I.

AT BALDWIN'S COURT.

My grand aunt Felicia was dead, the black edged letter lay before me addressed in my cousin Frank's handwriting. Yes, the poor old lady was gone, and I felt really sorry, for she had been kind to me before Frank and his sister had acquired such influence over her. The news was most unexpected, and before I had recovered from the shock, Sir John Bridge (whose private secretary I was) entered the room.

"What's amiss, Julian?" he asked kindly as he sat down to his letters, "Had bad news, eh?"

For answer I handed him the intimation. He read it, then glanced at the date.

"You should have received this sooner," he said. "The date of death is the fourth, and this is the eighth—you may just be in time for the funeral if you start for Baldwin's Court at once."

I looked at the date; Sir John was right; but how could they have been so careless? They knew where I was.

"Can I get away on such short notice, sir?" I asked.

"You can take a few days quite easily, Julian. You had better look up the trains at once, you haven't a minute to spare if it's the North Western you go by."

I seized a time-table and found that if I caught the 10.20 train

from Euston, I could reach Baldwin's Court in the afternoon. My preparations were soon made, and with my small valise I sprang into a hansom. Sir John called after me not to hurry back unless he wired, and I hastened off, fearing to lose the express train. But I was in time after all, and as I sped along at quick speed, I thought of poor aunt Felicia, and hoped I might yet be in time for the funeral. It seemed strange that Rasper had not written to tell me of her illness. Rasper was her maid, and had always been fond of me as a child. After I grew up, too, she had been devoted to "Master Julian," in spite of my getting into disgrace with her mistress; so her silence surprised me.

I had not seen my father's aunt for eight years, not since I was nineteen, when my cousin Felicia had made some mischief, as I suspected; but while I was abroad I had heard now and then from Rasper, telling me how things were going on. My cousin Felicia was almost always at Baldwin's Court, and her brother Frank paid long visits, indeed they seemed to have acquired great influence over the old lady. Rasper thought it probable they would try and get her to settle the estate and most of the money upon Frank, for my name seemed to be in bad odour with them all, and if Rasper ventured to mention it, she was promptly told to hold her tongue. All this recurred to me as I sped along, and I wondered how I should find things in the old house. My father's aunt was a very wealthy woman; she had been named after a rich spinster relative who left her all she had, and besides this she had inherited a considerable fortune from my great grandmother, for she had been the only daughter and was much younger than her brothers. My father was the son of the eldest brother, but Frank and his twin sister were considerably older than I was, quite ten years. I had once been aunt Felicia's favourite, but I had been away so long in India and China, that she might have forgotten my very existence, while the others were always there. I was making my own way and did not need her money, but for all that I grudged Frank having it. He was not a straightforward or honourable man, and his sister was very little better. I did not telegraph to Frank *en route*, so when at last the train steamed into Heys—the little station I was bound for—I had to hire a trap at the nearest inn—the "Heys Arms"—to take me the four miles between the station and Baldwin's Court. It was after six o'clock when I found myself at the end of my

journey, and a glance at the big, old, rambling mansion convinced me that the funeral was over. The blinds were drawn up and many of the windows open. My knock was answered by a stranger, in the place of old Barnes, the ancient butler (the only man my grand aunt allowed to sleep in the house), and my enquiry for Mr. or Miss Eastwell was civilly received. I was requested to wait in the morning room, and asked to give my name.

"Say it is Mr. Julian," I said, "I have forgotten my cards."

It was fully half an hour before Felicia came in, though I had distinctly caught the sound of her voice several times, evidently conversing with Frank in another room.

Felicia had always been handsome, in a cold still sort of way, and the deep mourning she wore became her better than any colour could have done. I knew she must be quite thirty-seven, but she had "worn well"—there was not a single wrinkle round her eyes, not a white thread in her abundant fair hair; her figure was as fine as ever, her step as elastic. The change in my appearance seemed to take her by surprise, for she started when she came in.

"Julian! you here?" she said, faltering a little, but holding out her hand. Felicia's hand was large, white and beautifully shaped, but very strong.

"Yes," I answered quietly, "I came off at once, but I suppose I am too late for the funeral."

"It was yesterday," she said in a low tone, as if it cost her an effort.

"Why was I not told in time, Felicia?" I asked hastily. "Surely as the elder son's son, it was my right, as it was my duty, to be present?"

"We did not know where to send; Frank had forgotten the address, and no one here knew it. We sent off the intimation the moment we discovered your address." She spoke with a curious carefulness, like a child repeating a lesson, and I knew that she lied to me.

"I suppose Frank is the heir," I said questioningly, "or rather, that you are joint heirs together?"

"Yes, Frank has the land and most of the money," she answered slowly. She was quite calm, but very pale.

"Rasper could have told you where I was, had you asked her," I said. "She never lost sight of me." Felicia's face changed strangely as I mentioned the faithful old lady's-maid. But she answered at once:

" You don't know then that Rasper quarrelled with her mistress two months ago, and gave notice." This was astounding news—that Rasper, who had been aunt Felicia's maid ever since she was seventeen, should quarrel with her life-long friend and leave her mistress when both were close on seventy, was a thing to wonder at indeed.

" Where on earth is she gone to ? " I demanded bluntly.

" I cannot say, I am sure," replied my cousin. " Most likely to her nephew in Cornwall, or her niece in Guernsey."

" It is amazing," I said, still bewildered, " But what was the matter with aunt Felicia ? I should think Rasper's leaving must have hastened her death."

" No, indeed, Julian," said Felicia suavely. " It was simple, natural decay, she just faded away from old age."

" But she was not seventy," I persisted; " many women are as hale and vigorous at her age as at yours or mine ; she would fret after Rasper I feel sure."

" You are mistaken," said Felicia, drawing herself up frigidly at my clumsy allusion to her age, " But may I ask, Julian, if you have taken a room at the inn or if you mean to stay here to-night ? If you stay I must give my orders, of course."

There was no warmth in her tone, and I bitterly regretted I had not thought of this before. But it was too late now to see about lodgings, so I had no alternative.

" Upon my word, Felicia, I forgot," I said, feeling all the time her cold, blue eyes were fixed on me, " but I hope I am not putting you to inconvenience by staying." She did not answer directly ; she seemed to be thinking and revolving something in her mind. I was beginning to feel ill at ease when she spoke again.

" Of course it is inconvenient under the circumstances, but as it can't be helped now, there is no use saying anything about it," she remarked coldly. " We dine at half-past seven, so you had better go to your room at once. You will see Frank at dinner." And, touching the bell, she gave her orders, and I found myself following the man upstairs before a single word of apology had entered my mind. The room was not the one I had so often occupied before, it was at the other end of the house, and overlooked the offices behind. My first one had been close to aunt Felicia's bedroom, and had a beautiful view of the woods and the stream, besides being directly

above the lovely old Dutch garden. Still it was a comfortable room, and I dressed and was ready to descend when the gong sounded for dinner. Two people were in the dining-room when I entered—my cousin, Frank Eastwell, and a young lady. I had been prepared to find Frank as unchanged as his sister, but his appearance gave me an unpleasant surprise. He had aged terribly, and not only that, but the marks of a life of dissipation and fast living were plainly stamped upon his once handsome face, in a manner not to be mistaken. He received me in the old half-careless, half-sneering way, without any expression of surprise at the unexpectedness of my visit, and introduced me to the young lady. She was a Miss Hartley—Felicia called her Rachel, and I wondered secretly what had brought her there, whether she was a guest or some sort of companion of Felicia's. They both treated her as though they knew her well, and she addressed them by their christian names.

As we took our places at table, I saw Felicia glance with a frown at the array of wine bottles on the sideboard, and she said something in an undertone to the man who waited. He was proceeding to remove several, when Frank told him savagely to let them alone, and I could not but observe that Felicia bit her lips and grew a shade paler. But she made no remark, and the meal began. Frank talked in a desultory way, now to Miss Hartley, now to me, but his sister ate her dinner in almost entire silence. The meal was well cooked and well served, and if my aunt's cook had left with Rasper and Barnes, her successor evidently knew her business quite as well.

I was seated opposite to Miss Hartley, with my back to the light, so I could look at her unobserved, and I took full advantage of the position. She was neither pretty nor striking in appearance ; but the simplicity and sweetness of her expression attracted me. In figure rather *petite*, with dark hair and eyes, she looked about twenty-three. As the dinner progressed, I saw that Frank paid her a good deal of attention, but it struck me that she was rather afraid of him, and more so of Felicia.

The day had been close and sultry, and clearly a storm was brewing, for, reflected in the mirror just opposite me, great banks of clouds with fiery edges, and dull touches of copper here and there, could be seen hovering on the horizon, ready to close in the moment the sun sank. The breathless pause that always precedes a thunder-storm was in the air, not a leaf stirred on the trees, and the birds

had long since retired to the depths of the plantation beyond. Felicia, I remembered, was dreadfully afraid of a storm, and I knew the terror of it was upon her as she addressed Frank pointedly, while I held the door open for her and Miss Hartley to pass out.

"As Julian is here for the evening, I suppose you will not remain long, Frank," she said turning towards him.

"Oh, Julian need be in no hurry, now he is here he can surely stay a day or two," her brother replied half-carelessly; "can't you, Julian?"

I saw the look of anger that darkened Felicia's face; and I saw something more—an eager, entreating glance from Miss Hartley's dark eyes; an almost imperceptible, imploring sign. That decided me, but before I could say a word, Felicia hastily interposed.

"You forget, Frank, Julian cannot stay; he has his employer to consider." She spoke in hard metallic tones.

"I am quite at liberty, Felicia," I rejoined. "So I shall be happy to accept your invitation, Frank."

Felicia was furious; both at her brother for proffering, and at me for accepting the invitation, though she said nothing. Probably she saw as I did, that Frank had taken more than was good for him; for she passed out silently, with her usual haughty grace, evidently not caring to provoke a scene, and I rejoined her brother. But Frank soon rose, saying he was going to see Sims at the lodge. Sims had fallen from a ladder a few days before and had hurt himself. On inquiry I found it was not the old gardener whom I used to know, but his son, a retired soldier, who was head gardener now old Sims was dead. Another of the faithful old servants gone, I commented to myself, as I lit my cigar and strolled out to the wide terrace to smoke it.

The sun had set, and the clouds loomed blacker in the distance, but enough light was left for me to distinguish the well-remembered flower beds, and oddly clipped bushes and shrubs of the garden, as, leaning against the parapet, I looked down upon it. Presently I caught sight of a dark figure flitting among the gathering shadows, and wondered who could choose to be there at such a time. But my idle wonder changed to amazement, when the figure, darting from bush to bush as if dreading observation, came at length close to the wall under the balcony, and I recognised Miss Hartley. Astonishment held me dumb for a moment, and before I could speak she anticipated me.

"Mr. Eastwell, can I see you alone, and at once?" she asked in a trembling agitated voice.

"Of course you can, Miss Hartley," I replied, disguising my surprise as much as possible, and throwing away my cigar, "I am at your service this very moment."

"Not here," she said quickly, "come with me, I know where we can be undisturbed."

I ran down the steps and joined her, and then saw how terribly pale and scared she looked; frightened, I imagined, at fear of the impending thunderstorm. She had wrapped a black lace shawl round her head, and in its sombre folds her face looked ghastly in the strange lurid semi-darkness. She turned and I followed her down to a curious mausoleum-like stone summer-house, that stood at the far end of the garden. It was a damp, cold, slimy sort of place, but she entered it without hesitation, and of course I followed. It was just light enough for us to see each other's faces, though it would soon be quite dark. She turned round the moment we got inside, and laid her hand upon my arm.

"Mr. Eastwell, I do not know you, but I think I can trust you, indeed I *must*! I cannot keep silent any longer; it will kill me," she continued wildly with quivering lips. Her agitation was painful to see. I took the hand she had laid upon my arm, and held it firmly as I answered.

"Indeed you *can* trust me, Miss Hartley. Tell me how I can help you, and be sure I will do it." I saw now that the storm had nothing to do with her terror.

"Mr. Eastwell, can the dead return to haunt the places that they loved in life? Can they make themselves seen or heard by those they cared for?" she asked, her eyes fixed upon mine with feverish anxiety. Now, in my younger days, I had scorned all belief in the supernatural, but in India, China, and Japan, I had seen some very strange things, and had heard of a good many more, so I hesitated how to answer; for now I felt sure the girl had got a fright of some sort. My grand aunt's recent death must have something to do with it, too, I concluded. But she was waiting; I must say something to soothe her.

"I can neither prove nor disprove that, Miss Hartley," I quietly replied. "No one can, I think; but tell me why do you ask."

"Because I have *heard* my guardian since her death, and I know

that Felicia has *seen* her," she answered, her great dark eyes alight with fear.

"Was aunt Felicia your guardian, Miss Hartley?" I questioned in astonishment, "I never knew it."

"I know you did not," she answered softly, "she said she would tell you herself when you came back. You never heard of me, yet I know something of you, for she spoke to me of you."

I was more surprised than I cared to let her see. Who was this girl, and why was my grand-aunt made her guardian? As if divining my thoughts, Miss Hartley went on quietly :

"Papa made Miss Eastwell my guardian jointly with my uncle Ernest. He did not like uncle Ernest's people, so he left me in Miss Eastwell's care until I should reach the age of twenty-five. Hartley Grange is let till then, so I live mostly here. I don't think Felicia likes it, for she is always wanting me to go to uncle Ernest's. I was there when dear Auntie died; they sent for me, but I was too late to see her again alive. I was away too when Rasper left; I think my guardian was never the same after that: she would not have another maid, so Felicia did all she wanted, though I don't think Auntie liked it; she wanted Rasper; it was cruel of Rasper to leave her."

"What was the quarrel about; I cannot understand *why* Rasper should go?" I asked, curious to hear if she could enlighten me as to Rasper's conduct.

"I can't tell you a word about it, Mr. Eastwell. Felicia is so angry when it is spoken about. She told me never to mention it to Auntie, and I never did. Felicia frightens me when she is angry," the girl said quite simply. No wonder she was afraid; I knew what Felicia could be when in a rage.

"When I came back and found dear Auntie dead, it was dreadful," Miss Hartley resumed after a pause. "To be here with Felicia and Frank was horrid. Frank has often been quite tipsy lately, and Felicia has been so cross and queer, she makes me wretched. They are my guardians now, I believe, and I must stay with them, I suppose, but since I heard what I have heard, and saw Felicia's face that time, I feel that if I stay I shall go mad."

She clasped her small hands passionately, the tears of grief and terror streaming down her pale cheeks. I felt that something strange or awful must cause such wild emotion, and I tried to calm her, partly succeeding.

" My dressing-room is next the one Auntie used to have," she continued, " but it is in another passage altogether, in the same one as Felicia's, though not next to hers. On the night I came home from Stanton, I was in that room to see that Ellis had unpacked my things properly, and I sat down, for I was tired. I was thinking of Auntie, and wishing I had been in time to see her alive, when all of a sudden I heard through the wall between our rooms the sound of moaning, just such moaning as Auntie's when she was distressed or in pain. At first I forgot about her death and listened, but the moans stopped, and then I remembered, and ran out of the room, for I was frightened to stay. I could not sleep at night, though I did not tell Felicia then, not till after. But I heard the moans last night, after the funeral was over and all the people gone, so I told Felicia, and she was even more frightened than I was, though she insisted it was fancy. She changed my room at once, but that did not make me forget, and something else helped me to remember even better. I could not sleep last night, I was restless with excitement, and Frank kept me talking in the library till very late. It was almost twelve when I went up to my room; Felicia had gone up some time before me, and I heard the clock strike as I went along the passage to my new room. I turned to look back, and as I did so, Felicia came running out from the one leading to Auntie's rooms, with such a ghastly face that I felt frozen with horror. She shut and locked the door, and leant against the wall panting. When I could, I went to her to see if I could help her, and she was like a mad woman; her eyes rolling, her teeth chattering, as she repeated over and over, not seeing me, 'The face of the dead,' 'The face of the dead.' When she turned and saw me she was furious. She sprang at me, and shook me till it hurt, and had Frank not come up just then, I don't know what she might have done. He was angry with her, and went himself with me to the door of my room. She said something this morning about having got a fright; and I *know* she had seen Auntie, just as I had heard her. Before you came to-day, when dressing for dinner, I went to my old room for my jewel-case, and I heard the moans again. Oh! Mr. Eastwell! can it be that Auntie's spirit haunts the rooms she used when she was alive? can she have left something undone here—something she would fain set right, though it is too late?"

The sweet earnest voice ceased; it was too dark now to see, but I

felt she was trying to read my face—that her eyes were straining in the gloom to see it. I was just on the point of comforting her as best I could, when a vivid blue glare suddenly lit up the old summer-house, while a deafening crash of thunder seemed to fall upon its very roof. The storm was upon us; in a minute we seemed to be standing in the middle of a sea of living fire, as the glare of the lightning darted its forked tongues around us. The thunder was one fearful roll and crash, never silent for a single moment. And then came the roar of the rain beating upon the roof, and the clash and clamour of the trees, tossed violently against each other. The weird light showed me Miss Hartley crouching on the moss-covered floor, her face hidden in her hands, and her long dark hair falling in disorder around her. I lifted her up and drew her into the corner farthest from the door, and held her firmly there with one hand, and so we remained for such a length of time, that it seemed to me it must be near day-break before that fearful commotion of the elements lessened. At last it did begin to slacken. The peals became less frequent and more distant. The lightning was not so vivid, with a longer interval between the flashes; and the rain, though still heavy, was not the fierce downpour it had been. When I looked out, I could see that, though most of the windows of the Court were dark, a few still had lights; so I proposed we should make a rush for it and gain an entrance by the window of the dining-room opening upon the terrace. My companion raised no objection, so still holding her to steady her steps, we ran by the nearest way to the terrace stair, and entered the room I had quitted more than three hours before.

CHAPTER II.

A DEATH-LIKE stillness reigned in the house. Where was Felicia? Surely Frank had returned? My perplexity was reflected in Miss Hartley's face.

"Where can they all be? Are there no servants?" I asked, as I lowered the smoking lamp in the blackened globe, where it must have flared for hours.

"There are very few, I believe," she answered. "Most of the servants refused to remain with Felicia, and their places are not yet

filled ; but Atkins the new butler, Mrs. Marsh the new cook, and Ellis the housemaid ought to be about. Perhaps they are frightened."

"Very likely," I said. "And just as likely Felicia and Frank are in the drawing-room. Let us go and see."

But the stately, old-fashioned room which I remembered so well was empty. The blinds were not drawn, and a faint twilight, just enough to make things visible, prevailed. The room looked solemn and ghostly, and Miss Hartley came nearer to me, and I heard her draw a shivering breath.

"Don't let us wait here," I said cheerfully. "Probably they are in Frank's room ; Felicia is afraid of thunder."

We went into the passage, where a light burnt on a bracket, and I led the way to Frank's room. But here too all was deserted ; the room was in disorder, he had not been in it since he dressed for dinner. Miss Hartley sat down dejectedly upon a settee, and I was just going to propose a visit to Felicia's quarters, when the swish of trailing garments coming from the passage outside fell upon my ears. Making a sign to my companion to remain still, I opened the door softly and looked out, just in time to see a tall woman in a blue dressing-gown disappearing round the corner through the curtained doorway. Without thinking, I at once stole down to the curtain ; the stealthy, gliding motion of the woman filled me with suspicion, for who would creep along like that, and at such an hour, if their purpose were a good one ? The heavy curtain was not entirely drawn back, and by standing close to the wall, I could see the opposite door and curtain, the entrance to my grand-aunt's apartments, without being seen. The woman had just reached the door when I saw her. She held a small lamp in one hand, in the other a basket with a lid over it ; but setting both down, she took from an inner pocket a bunch of keys, and fitting one in the lock, she turned it with some difficulty. Pushing the door cautiously open, she stooped for her lamp and basket, and as she did so, to my intense amazement I recognised my cousin Felicia. The sight of her *there* caused me actually to recoil, and as I fell back a pace I found Rachel Hartley just behind me. We gazed in dumb consternation at each other ; and heard Felicia locking the door behind her, which told us we could not follow her, even if we wished.

What was she doing there ? What could take her to those silent, deserted rooms at midnight ? I saw the question in my companion's

face, and as I read it, a wild, a horrible idea darted through my mind; an idea, the very thought of which turned me sick and faint. I fell back against the wall, cold drops of moisture gathering on my brow, my heart beating violently, while Rachel gazed into my face speechless, but the girl saw and *understood*. Without one word being spoken between us, she uttered a low, sobbing cry. "Oh! not that! not that!" and then stood, her hands clasped over mine, her dark eyes wide with horror and anguish, but perfectly calm; ready for any emergency. She was the calmer of the two just then.

I had small time to form any plan of action; at any moment Felicia might return; she had more than a woman's strength, I must take her unawares before she could summon Frank to her assistance. Miss Hartley was quite ready for anything I might tell her to do, and she fully realised that we must be prompt. Taking her lace shawl, I told her in a few hurried whispers what I wanted, and motioning that she understood, she drew into the corner, concealed by the curtain, while I stood, shawl in hand, on the other side. And so we waited for quite half an hour, hearing nothing but the shutting of a distant door in a remote part of the house.

The storm had spent itself; both rain and wind had ceased. At last, the faint click of a door being locked in the closed passage, could be heard, and we braced ourselves for the coming scene. We could hear the faint rustle of her skirt as she neared the door, and she seemed to pause for a moment, as though to listen if all was quiet before she came out. Then the door was unlocked and pulled slowly back, and Felicia stepped noiselessly out between us. Her lamp had been extinguished, but I could see in the dim light that she was deadly pale and trembled; she could have put her hand upon either of us, but we were well hidden.

Before she could turn round to close the door, I threw the black lace over her face and seized her hands; and Rachel glided swiftly behind, pushed the door to the wall and removed the keys, putting the bunch in my coat pocket. Felicia uttered a suppressed cry, and struggled hard to free herself from my grasp, and as soon as I felt the keys dropped into my pocket I released her. She snatched the shawl from her head, and, as she met my look, staggered back as though to seize the door handle, but almost fell, the door being wide open. Then she saw Miss Hartley, and the guilty, baffled look that crossed her face, I hope I may never see again. There was *murder*

and worse in the cold, blue eyes that turned from Rachel Hartley to me : she knew that the game was played out, that she had lost, but the indomitable pride of the woman bore her up, even amid the shame and agony of discovered guilt. She looked at me fixedly as I addressed her.

"Come with me, Felicia ; I will see you safely into your own room, and safe from *yourself*, before I look into the awful secret you have hidden behind that door," I said calmly. "Miss Hartley, will you show me Miss Eastwell's room?"

Not a word did Felicia answer as Rachel stepped forward. I simply signed to her to move, and she turned back with me along the way she had come. Miss Hartley shivered, and her tears fell as I secured Felicia to a chair with the sheets torn into strips. She was as helpless in that chair as though in a prison cell, more so indeed. When she was firmly secured, I told her that as soon as I had made sure of her brother, I should return to see what she had to say, and we left her staring straight before her, locking the door after us.

We went down to the great hall, and listened again for any sound of life from the other inmates of the Court, but, as before, all was silent. I proposed we should look for Frank in the library or smoking room, and we were on the point of doing so, when the sound of a knock upon the closed outer door fell upon our ears. It startled us both, coming at such an hour, and while we were passing through such a crisis ; but I knew it must mean something of consequence when the knocker was used in the dead of night, so I hastened to unfasten the heavy door, and throw it wide open. Two men stood in the shadow of the portico; I could but dimly see them. One was very tall, the other short, both seemed young. The tall one spoke :

"Is there anyone here who will help us with the master ? He has met with an accident from the lightning. Can you send some of the servants to help to carry him up?"

Rachel gave a slight scream.

"Where is he, and how did it happen?" I enquired. "And who are you?"

"I am Sims, sir. Mr. Eastwell came to the lodge to ask how my arm was ; I broke it a few days ago. He would not wait until the storm was over, he said Miss Eastwell would be frightened, so he started off with Dan as soon as the rain slackened. In the avenue a bright flash almost took Dan's sight away, and when he

looked round, the master was lying under the trees, and did not move. Dan could not lift him alone, and he came back for me. I am useless, sir, as you see, and Dan is but a lad; we need help to fetch him home. I fear the worst, sir."

The man was a good talker; I rather liked him. But something told me his fears were well founded. At that moment I saw the face of Atkins, the new butler, behind Miss Hartley; he had evidently heard at last, and came forward to see what was the matter. There was no time for talking or explanation; Miss Hartley went at once to get the women to prepare Frank's room, and I started with Atkins and Sims to fetch their master home, sending the lad off for the doctor.

The moment I saw Frank's face by the light of the lantern Sims carried, I knew he was past all human aid, and the men knew it too. He was lying under a huge elm, whose trunk, split right in two, was charred and black. The ground, too, was, for some distance, torn up, showing plainly the track of the fatal flash, and Frank's hair and beard had been singed. We carried him reverently to the house, but though we undressed him, and tried every means to restore consciousness, we knew it was a vain task, and by and by desisted. Then I remembered Miss Hartley, and leaving the other men and the housekeeper in Frank's room, I went in search of her.

I crossed the wide, upper hall, and went straight down the long passage towards Aunt Felicia's apartments. A light shone from under the door of the one that had been her bedroom, and I paused there; but not long. Softly turning the handle I looked in, and almost cried out, though what I saw was only what I expected to see. On the bed, close to the wall, lay the figure of a woman, apparently asleep, her face hidden in the shade of the heavy velvet curtain, while kneeling by the side of the bed, her face buried in her hands, was Rachel Hartley.

The room was filled with a curious, sickly odour, which seemed familiar to me, though I could not at once recall where I had smelt it before. Rachel did not move as I crossed the room to her side, nor even look up when I touched her shoulder. I put back the curtain that hid the occupant of the bed, and an involuntary cry escaped me, for I was looking down upon the sleeping face of my grand-aunt Felicia.

I stood for a moment staring blankly at her, then as Rachel did

not move, and the close, sickening, perfumed air was affecting me strangely, I went to the shuttered window and tried to unbar it, but there was a padlock on the bar which resisted all my efforts. Then I remembered the keys in my pocket, and sure enough the key of the padlock was there. I threw the sash wide, letting in a rush of cool, delicious air, and turned again to Rachel. Evidently she had fainted, so I carried her to the window. She had been overcome by that peculiar odour, whose effects I myself had felt, and soon revived, and sat up, smiling faintly, saying she was better. We went back to the bedside together.

"Thank heaven we found this out," she said solemnly, laying her hand on my grand-aunt's forehead. "How strange—how very strange it is, and we thought her dead. How could they be so cruel? *What made them do it?*"

"I think I know," I answered gravely. "But we shall get all the truth from Felicia, now that Frank is gone; she will be utterly broken by his death, for she was devoted to him. The doctor can do Frank no good. I shall ask him to come here, for I recognise this queer perfume now. It is scented opium, and Aunt Felicia is under its influence: she will sleep it off by and bye. Will you come with me to see if the doctor has arrived?"

She preferred to remain; so knowing there was now no danger, as the room was almost clear of the heavy fumes, I saw her comfortably settled in an easy chair, with the fresh air blowing into the room, and went off to see if Dr. Herbert had come.

It was not Dr. Herbert, however, but a stranger who I found awaiting me in Frank's room. He introduced himself as Dr. Gordon, the doctor's late assistant and successor, and we left the room together, after he had assured us that my cousin had been instantaneously killed by the electric fluid.

"But I don't understand you, Mr. Eastwell," he said, after I had explained what I wanted. "The lady you speak of was certainly under my care; but she died last week. I attended her funeral yesterday, and heard her will read. The poor fellow lying in the room we have just left was her heir; he and his sister got all she had."

"I know you are telling me what you believe is the truth, and what others would tell me too," I answered. "There has been some strange fraud practised, Dr. Gordon. Come with me, I en-

treat you ; you may be able to help me unravel a dark mystery. My cousin Frank is dead ; I am his heir-at-law, and I want to preserve the family honour. You medical men come across strange things I know, and often hold in your hands clues which might bring men to the gallows, if their relatives gave the word. But the culprit in this case is a woman, and both for her own sake and that of her intended victim, I wish to spare her."

The doctor held out his hand impulsively.

"I will do all I can to help you, Mr. Eastwell ; you may trust me," he said earnestly, and I saw he meant what he said.

I took him straight to my aunt's room, telling him on the way what I had done with Felicia, and that as yet she did not know that Frank was dead.

"This is not the lady I attended, whose death certificate I signed," Dr. Gordon remarked, as he gazed down at Aunt Felicia ; and for the moment I felt completely baffled. "The lady I understood to be Miss Eastwell was certainly old, but her complexion was darker, and her hair not so streaked with grey."

"Rasper!" Miss Hartley and I cried in a breath, and Dr. Gordon was evidently surprised at our exclamation. He could have known nothing of Rasper, we remembered.

"What was the illness she died of ?" I asked.

"Paralysis at first, then gradual but natural decay," he answered. "She could neither speak nor move after the first shock, and just grew weaker and weaker. But I remember now, she used to look uneasy when I called her Miss Eastwell, and her eyes seemed to follow Miss Felicia in an imploring way, when she heard me use that name."

Poor Rasper ! Light was dawning upon me already : I only needed a little help from Felicia. What a clever, unscrupulous schemer she was !

"Rasper was my aunt's faithful old attendant," I said. "She, being helpless and unable to explain the truth to you, the plot once laid was easily carried out. How they meant to manage when the *real* Miss Eastwell died is a mystery to me. Felicia would no doubt have arranged that, as she did all the rest, I feel sure. I hope Dr. Gordon that she was kind to poor old Rasper ?"

"I think she was," he answered, "she did not need nursing, excepting that she required to be watched now and then. She

slept almost continuously for the last few weeks, and passed away in her sleep."

So poor Rasper's end had been a peaceful one : I was glad of that at any rate.

"Your guardian will not die, Miss Hartley," said the doctor kindly, seeing Rachel's deep distress. "She has been kept in a semi-conscious state for some time, but once thoroughly rid of these fumes, she will soon get all right, never fear."

Then I told him about Felicia, and he fully understood the plot my cousin had laid. We left Rachel watching by my aunt, and went to see my wretched cousin, Dr. Gordon, at my request, undertaking to tell her of Frank's death. The grey dawn was breaking as we entered her room ; and she took no notice whatever of our presence until he spoke. As I had anticipated, she was like a mad creature when she took in the sense of what he said, and knew that Frank was dead. To my amazement I discovered that my cold, self-contained cousin had once loved me, learnt for the first time, that a light, boyish speech of mine, long since forgotten, and remembered now with shame, had turned that passionate love to as passionate hate. But with Frank's death had gone all wish to dissemble, all desire to live, and when she grew calm enough to speak coherently, the whole of her scheme, of her guilt, was told as quietly as though nothing could matter any more in this world ; as indeed it could not to *her* at least, poor soul.

Frank had told her that unless a certain sum was forthcoming by a date only a few weeks distant, he should be utterly ruined and disgraced. She was in despair ; but that very night aunt Felicia had found fault with Rasper, and the old lady's maid had retired in anger from her mistress's presence. Aunt Felicia had a cold, and remained in bed. Next morning Rasper did not appear, and Felicia found her lying on the floor of her room, speechless and motionless, from a shock of paralysis. Rachel was away at her uncle's ; Dr. Herbert was ill, and would probably never be able to attend again ; his assistant was a stranger. Fate seemed to play into Felicia's hand.

From that hour her plans were skilfully laid, and as easily carried out, for not only was Rasper past all power of resistance, but aunt Felicia, deprived of the company and tendance of her faithful maid, drooped more and more. Felicia found it all very easy ; she kept

Rachel away, but, not until she had got her plot fairly working, did she tell her brother. At first he had been tractable, but latterly he had felt deep remorse, especially as the man, who had held him in his power, had died suddenly and so freed him. Finding that Felicia had gone too far to draw back, he had taken to drinking heavily, and she had lived in daily dread of his betraying her. My coming was another terror, and she had suffered tortures of guilty fear. She had paid her visits to her captive easily enough until Rachel came home, after which she made them at night when the girl had retired. The storm had frightened her, she had waited till it was over, thinking Rachel safe in her room, and Frank and I together.

There is not much more to tell of this strange story. My grand-aunt under Dr. Gordon's skilful treatment entirely recovered, and showed such joy on seeing me, that I knew I had never lost my place in her heart. There was of course some sensation caused by the supposed death, but though it was known that Felicia had brought herself within reach of the law, no action was taken. Frank's tragic end too helped to shield her. Dr. Gordon and I, ably assisted by Sir John Bridges, got her quietly away to France, and safely within convent walls before the real facts of the case leaked out, and as aunt Felicia flatly refused to prosecute, or even to speak of her own pretended death, the nine days' wonder as usual soon subsided.

She still survives, a hale old woman of seventy-six, and is a great grand-aunt, for Rachel and I have been married some years. Baldwin's Court echoes to the merry voices of children and the patter of little feet. We all live there together, the Grange being leased to Sir John Bridges. We sometimes hear of Felicia, in her Convent of Sainte Therése, from Sir John. She is very devout, and much given to prayer and fasting. Aunt Felicia, Rachel and I are too happy ourselves to bear malice; she has long ago been forgiven by us for the crime that failed.

Unto Him Fourfold.

By MURIEL C. LINDSAY,

Author of "CHERRY BLOSSOM," "MY MODEL," "MY CHUM,"
etc., etc.

THERE was a sharp tinge of frost in the air ; early in the afternoon snow had fallen, clothing the City for a brief spell in a mantle of dazzling whiteness, but now it was trodden under foot into grime and slush, making the pavements and roads wet and slippery.

A feeble moon could be seen, but its pale, wan light was entirely lost and swallowed up by the glare and glitter of the London streets.

As he sailed on the morrow, John Forsythe was giving a parting dinner to a few old cronies ; and now walked leisurely to his club, where they were to meet. His reflections were not unpleasant. Adventure he craved for ; the thought of rustling for his living stirred his blood pleasantly ; he was rather pugnacious by nature, and whatever he took in hand, he stuck to it until he carried it out.

And it was just as well that he was going : the old place was not the same since the Guv'nor departed, and Carrington was not all one cared for in an elder brother.

He reached the club steps, and was about to enter, when a tiny figure darted in front of him, and a small grimy fist held out a paper ; a thin voice piped plaintively :

"Buy a pyper, sir ? Oh, do, sir ; I ain't 'ad no luck this dy, an' if yer would——"

A pair of great grey eyes gazed up at him from under a tangle of red hair, and the little face was pinched and blue from hunger and cold.

"No luck, eh ?" said John kindly, taking the paper from the rough bleeding hand, raw from chaps. "Poor little soul, you look hungry. Here, take this and get a good feed with it, and get something too, to keep you warm."

"This," was a half-sovereign, and the child's eyes seemed to start out of her head with wonder at the unexpected gift. John laughed amusedly at her astonishment.

"There, go along," he said, giving her a good-natured push, and, as she began to slowly move away, she heard him greeted by name by a couple of men, and then they disappeared into the building.

With the gold firmly clutched in her paw, she made her way to the nearest coffee palace, picking up a "pal" on the road, and together they had a meal, such as they'd never eaten in their lives before. And in her after life, nothing ever tasted exactly so good as this unlooked for dinner did, to the lonely waif of the streets.

Forsythe's friends insisted on knowing upon what he was so busily engaged that he did not notice their approach : and their chaff was plentiful when he confessed his philanthropic act.

"Bread upon the waters, Forsythe," said one, "look out for its return after many days," he added jestingly.

John laughed and shook his head.

"No fear, old man, it's only in Sunday-school books that the hero's good deeds are rewarded ; in real life they are speedily forgotten."

The next day he sailed, and it was many years before London saw him again.

* * * *

Ten long years came and went, and once more John Forsythe walked upon the asphalt of London, no longer plain John Forsythe, but, by a series of events, Earl of Carrington.

Having been singularly lucky in all his ventures, he was now a very rich man, and on the death of his brother in the hunting field, had returned home after a prolonged tour, to succeed to the title and what was left of the estates.

Most of the land once owned by the Carringtons had been sold or mortgaged by his dissipated elder, and his first act was to buy back as much as he could, and to restore the old Court to something of its former splendour, and to find a suitable mistress to grace his home.

In spite of the encouragement given to a wealthy man, and an earl to boot, John had, up to the present, remained placidly heart-whole, and saw every prospect of so remaining, as he had seen no woman yet who made his pulses beat any the faster for her sake, and he had come to the conclusion that he had better take the first who presented herself, and trust to luck.

As he strolled down to his old club, where he was to meet the same men with whom he had spent his last evening ten years ago,

his mind went back to the little beggar, to whom he had proved such a Santa Clause, and he wondered absently what had become of her.

And curiously enough it was recalled to him again later in the evening, by one of the men who had witnessed the affair.

"I suppose she's dead," said Carrington indifferently in answer to the question, "or lived to swell the ranks of the unfortunate sisterhood," he added with a sigh.

After dinner they adjourned to the theatre. The play was a modern "problem" one, a new fashion since John went away, and but for the acting had no special attraction.

The leading lady, Nathalie Ross, was one of the most beautiful women of the day, famed alike for her Titian-coloured hair, and the absolute blamelessness and purity of her life. No breath of scandal had tainted her fair name, and she was known to be a brilliant and hard-working woman.

At the finish, Carrington, who had been strangely moved at the sight of the lovely creature on the stage, made his way behind, and asked for an introduction. He fancied she grew a trifle pale, and that her dark eyes sought his in a somewhat startled manner, but as there was no trace of embarrassment in her graciousness towards him, he concluded he was mistaken.

Nathalie asked him to call, and soon it came about, that few days passed when he did not visit the tiny flat. London wondered, then laughed and said that after all she was no better than the rest of them, and that it had known all along her virtue was only assumed.

For sometime neither heard the rumours about them, but continued their friendship tranquilly enough, although to Carrington the wish for more than friendship was becoming stronger every day: but it was not until a sneer and a low expression coupled with Nathalie's name was uttered in his presence, that he determined to speak.

His action was simplicity itself. After knocking the man down, he turned to the assemblage, saying in grave, even tones:

"I have done this, because that you insulted the fair fame of an innocent woman, whom I intend to ask to do me the honour of becoming my wife."

News of all kinds flies apace, and when he called the next morning Nathalie knew about his defence of her.

"Oh, why did you do it?" she cried, her eyes full of unshed tears. "What does it matter what they say of me? I am only an actress, you know, and not worth fighting over."

She seized his hands with her warm impulsive ones, and would have raised them to her lips, had he not prevented her.

"No, no," he said hastily, "don't do that. Nathalie, I love you, give me the right to defend you always—be my dear wife."

The colour flamed high in her cheeks, and her lips quivered.

"You love me, you wish me to be your wife? You? Ah, this is wonderful."

"What is?" he queried, laughing, drawing her to him, "that I should love you?"

"Yes," she said gravely; "listen to what I have to tell you, and then—. Ten years ago on a cold winter's night, do you remember giving a gold piece to a little ragged, half-starved girl?"

He nodded. "Yes, I do, but how does that concern you?" he asked.

"In this way, *I* was that little girl, I and no other. I was a friendless little waif, and your money was the first kind action I had ever received in my short life. Small wonder that I remembered, and hearing your name, treasured it up in my heart. With that gold I laid the foundations of my present position. A small pantomime engagement led to others, and slowly and surely I worked my way up. Oh, it has been hard, and I have been sorely tempted many a time, for I am beautiful, I know, but you were before me like a guiding-star, and I kept myself what I knew you would have me be; I have waited for you, I am yours, do with me what you will."

His arms closed round her, and as their lips met, she heard him whisper, "My wife!"

The Song of the Sword.

I've carved my way to fortune and fame
On many a well-fought field ;
Tho' foes were many, and odds were great,
And comrades the victims of hapless fate :
I was never known to yield.

I was ever the first in the thickest fight,
When death was marking its own ;
When my master's hand was aching and sore,
And my blade was dripping with ruby gore,
As I turned brave hearts to stone.

My sweep is broad, my tooth is keen :
Biting thro' casque and mail ;
And sparkles flash from my naked blade,
As many foes in the dust are laid,
When bullets fall like hail.

I've fought for freedom and fatherland,
For honour, love, and right ;
To avenge the oppressed, and succour the weak,
To uphold the poor, and support the meek,
Was ever my noblest fight.

And now I am old and dinted and worn,
With bloodstains on my blade,
And I lie in repose in my rusted sheath,
With a record of honour underneath,
And of glories that cannot fade.

GERALD HAYWARD.

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Damocles, or the Gates of Janus.

By THEODORA CORRIE.

Author of "IN SCORN OF CONSEQUENCE," "PETRONELLA DARCY,"
"ONLY THE AYAH," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

"Mon âme a erré comme dans un paradis de rêveries."

"Il n'y a pas d'isolement pour qui sait prendre sa place dans l'harmonie universelle et ouvrir son âme à toutes les impressions de cette harmonie."

M. DE GUERIN.

DURING the next few years the mode of life at Godwin's Rest went on uneventfully enough. Every day May and Henrietta took a walk with their nurse, or else rode out, turn and turn about, on their small Shetland pony. A visit to the village general shop constituted their greatest treat. Henrietta loved the very smell of that small front room, with its uneven brick floor : a smell made up of bacon, tallow dips, coffee and groceries of all sorts. The great scales standing on the counter were always interesting, and the smaller pair hanging from a beam in the low raftered ceiling proved even more inviting, for in them were measured out the pear drops, and barley sugar fishes bought at long intervals : or the great red and yellow striped pincushions, and peppermints, more often purchased by Sophie for her own eating. They were good for the indigestion, but not for children she would say ; and what the indigestion might be Henrietta could never make out.

In Mrs. Reay's shop the space was so narrow between the counter and the wall, that no two people could pass each other, or turn round : and the solemn procession thus necessitated, in and out, formed another source of pleasure. But the shop behind was large, and the passage opened into an inner room, where calico and wonderfully patterned neckerchiefs were sold. Here the children never went, though an inner door sometimes left ajar permitted glimpses of this seemingly mysterious region.

Mrs. Reay's black cap, adorned with purple flowers, nodding over a rubicund brow, had a certain good-natured rakishness in its set, corresponding with Mrs. Reay's own manners. "Me and my husband

always tops up with a glass of brandy and water at nights, it's good for the indigestion," she would remark. Here was another remedy suited to the mysterious ailment; but the children never coveted the brandy and water, only the peppermints.

Next to their shopping expeditions they loved visiting a small cottage—a tiny moss-covered building set down in the park adjoining the Chase, where lived an old lady's-maid of their grandmother's. Mrs. Dover had once been a village beauty, and had married the blacksmith on the Godwin estate. She was a sweet faced woman still: white haired and blue eyed, with a gentle dignity of manner that would not have disgraced a duchess. Her voice was never raised; her serenity never ruffled; and she was always ready with a welcome for her master's grandchildren.

To go here; to escape from Sophie, to race down the long rides of cherry trees while the poor bonne, like panting time, toiled vainly in the rear; this was a favourite pastime with the children. The very flowers in Mrs. Dover's garden were surely sweeter than those at Godwin's Rest. Musk grew here in profusion, and giant honeysuckle, and cabbage, and moss-roses, and lad's-love, and bachelor's-buttons, and old fashioned clove pinks, and sweet peas, and great white annunciation lilies, with their golden crowns of pollen, making a confusion of sweets. And in the parlour stood a corner cupboard, with hideous Chinese mandarins nodding upon it. And inside on the shelves were wide mouthed green glasses; and sometimes in the hot weather, the children would have a taste of Mrs. Dover's home-made wine—ginger, or elderberry, or real metheglin, brewed from virgin honey, with no headache in it, the kind old dame averred: but this last treat came rarely. At every visit refreshment was offered, but the children always looked at their nurse, regulating their answers by her nod or shake of the head; and alas more often than not Sophie made a negative signal. Still, there was always the delightful possibility that she might nod an affirmative.

Then Mrs. Dover distilled elder flowers, over a slow fire built on the hearth in the back kitchen: and the steam trickling in tears of pure elder into a bottle, the fire with its clouds of sparks, and the old-fashioned bellows were all sources of fascination not to be found at home.

Once a year, too, on the children's birthday, they went to tea

under the shade of a giant elm just outside the cottage, and discussed clotted cream like two kittens. Here, not twenty yards from the elm tree, hummed the machinery of a water saw-mill; and a delicious fall, green and quivering, shot over the brow of the chalk, rushing along in a foaming cascade, down which "slide" many fleets of walnut-shell boats danced gaily to death.

Yes, the park held a store-house of delight for the children, from the first days in spring when they used to look up with unavailing covetousness at the drifted snow of bloom on the cherry trees (planted long centuries before by dead and gone monks), to the time, when grown taller, they could just reach the boughs, and pick off the mossed and netted acorn cups from the foreign oaks, transplanted here a hundred years ago by their own great-grandfather.

As the children grew older, walks and rides became supplemented with lessons. Mrs. Godwin objected to a resident governess, and was fortunate in securing the services of two maiden ladies, in somewhat reduced circumstances, who lived within five minutes walk of Godwin's Rest, in a tiny cottage called the Nutshell.

The Misses Swann were sisters, daughters of a clergyman. Their father, being in delicate health, had held a foreign chaplaincy during the latter years of his life, but before then he had been for a long time the rector of Godwin's Worthy, and much beloved. At his death it seemed only natural that the Misses Swann should return to their native place, and eke out their income by teaching. In the village they were as much a part of the reigning institutions as the clerk, or the old postman.

Drusilla, the elder sister, cared little for books. True, in her girlish days she had dutifully ploughed in the wake of her father through much astronomy and more Latin: but music or modern languages held no attractions for her. She took an innocent pride in the accomplishment of her more talented sister, whose education had been completed at a first-class school in Paris, and whose musical gifts were of an exceptionally high order.

The village said that Miss Swann was a well-informed woman. She never took the Pleiades for Orion, or enquired after the position of the "middle-sized," or "polar bear" like some of her less learned neighbours. No, Miss Swann made none of these mistakes, though on matters of etiquette her ideas were peculiar. She never allowed a man about the place, saying that it would be an indecorous ar-

rangement. Being one of the strong ones of the earth, she managed the small plot of ground at the back of the house on a plan of her own devising: hoeing potatoes, picking peas, and pulling radishes very contentedly; only assisted, under protest, in the heavy digging by the village clerk, who made his appearance by stealth, at Miss Lavender's private order, on those days when Miss Drusilla went to the country town to do necessary shopping.

Indoors Miss Swann also reigned supreme: washing up the breakfast china, dusting her own room, and watching over the one maid servant with the eye of a hawk. And when Miss Lavender would fain have helped in these household matters, Miss Drusilla always said, "No, my dear: such work is not for your fingers. Go out into the front garden and look after your roses."

But it must not be imagined that Miss Lavender was an idle person. She did more than see to the flowers in the front garden. Five days out of six, May and Henrietta were her pupils; and in the evening, she was never too tired to read the paper aloud, while Miss Swan cut out garments for the village clothing club, or sorted the books for the lending library. Miss Swann also managed the coal club, priding herself on keeping the books by double entry. With the children's lessons she gave some small help—a daily half-hour with the Latin grammar, and the rudiments of astronomy; but a sigh of relief always escaped her when this portion of the morning's work was safely accomplished.

Henrietta loved both her governesses, and never made fun of them behind their backs. Child though she might be, her instinctive reverence turned already to everything beautiful; and a quick eye could not fail to be struck by the mutual devotion of the two sisters; a devotion which no little oddities could tarnish.

May could never persuade Henrietta to tie on a "duster cap," in imitation of Miss Swann on cleaning days; or to hoe imaginary potatoes, followed by a family of imaginary ducks, waiting for worms. Some people never see anything but the ludicrous side of life, missing the tenderer half tones altogether.

Still it must be confessed that in appearance Miss Swann was not quite like other people. Two rows of grey curls hung down on either side of her rosy wrinkled cheeks. A coronet of hair, plaited rather thin, made a kind of open work circle round her head; the whole structure being kept in place by a tortoise-shell comb,

backed by a bow of ribbon. Her Sunday gown and bonnet were always of black silk; but in the week days, and more particularly in the mornings, her fancy ran riot. Her print dresses would have startled anyone not used to them, for the enormous patterns, and bunches, on her brightly flowered dimity were unique. To see her thus clad, with "jingling keys" at her girdle, produced a sort of fascination on Henrietta's mind: indeed, not only Miss Swann but the whole place seemed possessed of a certain quaintness, from the green baise blinds always draped over the clean paint of the yellow hall door, to the grooming of a tiny Shetland pony, yclept "Mary Anne," at whose toilette Henrietta sometimes surreptitiously assisted.

In vain had Miss Lavender suggested keeping a small boy for the pony: Miss Drusilla shook her head and said a boy would grow up in time, and such an arrangement could not be contemplated. In these matters Miss Lavender always gave way, for she was fifteen years younger than Miss Drusilla.

In appearance there was as much difference between the two sisters as in the burr of a chestnut and its fruit. Miss Lavender's rippling brown hair, untinged with grey, was turned off a pretty forehead, and coiled, low in her neck. In the morning her head was uncovered, but in the afternoon she generally wore lace lappets that had belonged to her grandmother; and this old-fashioned head dress, together with the sapphire ring, always on her left hand, had a certain fascination for other people besides Henrietta.

Some years ago on her return from abroad, Miss Lavender had been first governess, and then companion to Lady Evelyn Lisle; and during her stay at the Grange, had won not only the heart of her pupil, but, what was far more serious, had secured the affections of Maurice Lisle as well. Although the Duchess would not hear of an engagement, oddly enough the old Duke countenanced it. Perhaps he thought that his son's love for the pretty, gentle rector's daughter might prove a talisman to rather a wild nature. Perhaps he fancied that time and absence might cool this sudden passion—the young man's regiment being under orders for foreign service—and possibly he was anxious to retain a really first-rate governess for his head-strong little daughter. However this may have been, the affair ended sadly enough. Maurice fell, shot in the trenches before Sebastopol, within a year of his departure, and

nothing remained to Miss Lavender but a little packet of letters, and the ring that she always wore.

After the completion of her pupil's education she came home to the Nutshell, and had remained there ever since.

People with their usual wisdom declared that Miss Drusilla spoiled her younger sister ; they also remarked that Miss Lavender recovered from her trouble very quickly.

She never asked for the sympathy of the outside world, and went about among her poorer neighbours, much as usual.

Once a fortnight, in the warm summer weather, the sisters dined at the Chase ; the shaggy Shetland pony taking them there and back. They never stayed later than half-past nine o'clock, because Miss Drusilla feared that the night air might prove injurious to Mary Anne's precious constitution ; and this whim was humoured by Miss Lavender, though the health of the pony might have been likened to granite in its composition.

Once a fortnight Lady Evelyn went to tea at the Nutshell, and on these occasions Miss Swann gloried in the production of early radishes, or watercress ; but she would have felt genuine dismay had the lady of the manor complimented her on her gardening, or found out that "Lavvy's sister" washed up the tea things. It was only as "Lavvy's sister" that she minded, and she could never be brought to see that Miss Lavender did not mind at all. Lady Evelyn knew this, and if when calling, she caught a glimpse of a figure amongst the weeds in the onion bed, she always took a chair facing away from the back window, with the most unconscious air in the world.

"Did Lady Evelyn see me ?" Miss Swann would ask anxiously afterwards : and Miss Lavender would truthfully answer : "No, I am sure she didn't, but it wouldn't have mattered, Drusie."

"Oh, yes, sweet Lavender, it would," Miss Swann always said : "not to you, perhaps, you can do anything ; but I cannot be too particular for your sake."

The two sisters were very happy together, and happy also in their family possessions. Their exquisite china and glass, inherited from a great-grandmother, stirred even Mrs. Godwin's envy. Their race of white Persian cats seemed as well known in the place, and almost as famous as the Duke's prize orchids. And May and Henrietta's greatest treat sometimes took the shape of an invitation to drink tea

out of the old Rockingham china, and to romp with the cats, "Muff," and "Tiny."

Yes, the Misses Swann were a contented pair of sisters, despite their small means, and Miss Lavender's very feeble health.

Still there were times when midsummer came, and the water-lilies were in bloom on the lake at the Grange: when the tall stocks gave their sweet smell in the little front garden, and the musk carnations needed tying up, and the eleventh Sunday in Trinity came round—the date when Maurice sailed, and the two had parted from each other—there were days when there still came a look in the younger sister's eyes that gave Miss Swann a heart-ache.

It was then that Miss Lavender always felt the heat, and the children had their summer holidays; and Miss Drusilla used to go about the house softly, always knowing by intuition when the bedroom door was locked. And after such days were over, Miss Lavender would look at the plain elder sister and say quietly, "You are very good to me, Drusilla." No, there was no denying it, the two were all in all to each other.

It need scarcely be said that Miss Lavender made a very gentle teacher. In the atmosphere of love emanating from her whole person Henrietta's mind expanded, unfolding like a flower. May was a clever child, too, but in her cleverness lay no great brilliancy, save in a certain aptitude for making the most of her talents. She went on her way like a dancing, shallow brook, keeping pace merrily with her more gifted younger sister: since where one cut a deep road the other scampered along a narrower track, with equal satisfaction at least to herself.

Paul's holidays were the chief events to which the children looked forward. Paul never went though that school-boy stage of awkwardness which despises girls. Perhaps his grandmother's training saved him from this gaucherie, or else, where Henrietta was concerned, he followed the lead of the friend nearly ten years his senior. For whenever Ted Lisle was at home he never failed to invite the children to spend an afternoon at the Grange; and though May generally preferred to follow Sophie to the still-room, where she revelled in sweets like a fly in a honey-pot, Henrietta always remained with her host. In the eyes of the latter it was evident that the little princess could do no wrong.

Ted's recovery, if ever complete, seemed likely to be a long and tedious affair : the injuries he had sustained from his accident yielding only to time, rest, and careful treatment. Despite his delicate health, wherever he went he was a universal favourite. His good spirits were infectious, and his disposition eminently sociable. Children and animals generally found their way to his side unbidden, instinctively sure of a welcome. He had always plenty of stories to tell Henrietta, and Paul used to listen to these tales with a look of perplexity on his own face. "Why don't you write it all down," he would sometimes ask ; but at this question Ted always smiled and shook his head. The stories that he wove, like the strange melodies that Henrietta had already begun to evoke from the little old spinet, were but the outcome of some passing mood or fancy, fleeting and fugitive, not reckoned of sufficient importance to be perpetuated.

Paul on the other hand was always scribbling, never happy till some haunting idea had taken shape on paper. Writing was as necessary to him, as talking is necessary to the happiness of some people. Unlike Ted, he would never be fond of society. He was a born bookworm : and he revelled to his heart's content, in the contents of the splendid library at the Grange. When he was seventeen he left school, obtained a scholarship at Balliol College, and had a brilliant career at the university. More of a bookworm than ever, as the years went by, the intent far-away look that had rested upon his face as a child still lingered in his eyes as a man. Had it not been for this very expression of aloofness, and his unusual height, he might easily have passed unnoticed. As it was he interested some people, and baffled others quite unconsciously. Paul had never been a popular boy at school, and excepting for the fact that, like his father before him, he was a fine cricketer, he would have made but few acquaintances anywhere. The men of his own college looked upon him as a good fellow but a very odd one—odd with the eccentricity of genius. He had a great capacity for work, and lived by preference "with books for company," while his old habit of silence clung to him still, blocking up all the avenues that usually lead to intimacy. Passing through his college days much as he had passed through his school ones, he came home at the end of four years, with laurels in plenty ; with a brain full of fermenting ideas, and the manuscript of a half-written play in his portmanteau.

Mrs. Godwin often declared Paul to be a very stupid person. He could talk to his father, to Henrietta, or to some few strangers, if only they were sufficiently uninteresting: that is to say uninteresting from Mrs. Godwin's own point of view; but it was a mere piece of affectation that he should usually sit silent as a mute at a funeral, when he could perfectly well join in any general conversation. Of course no one could have expected Paul to grow up into a sensible man, since his father had always let him have his own way in everything. It was a great pity all the same, that that unfortunate manner of his had never been corrected. A manner just sufficiently unlike the rest of the world's to attract attention, would always rank as a source of irritation in Mrs. Godwin's eyes.

Henrietta sometimes wondered if a time might come when Paul would find it necessary to settle in France. True, he never referred to such a contingency; but a thousand unspoken evidences all pointed in this direction, touching the girl's inner consciousness like Iduna's "swarm of nervous apprehensions." Nowadays she never questioned Paul about his grandmother. A fine sense of delicate reserve had so far kept her silent; silent ever since that evening long ago when she had clung to him, sobbing out that he must not leave her, because she could not bear it. Yet the shadowy dread of her childhood's days still lingered; a dread never quite banished or forgotten. Paul would soon be of age, and then he would revisit La Navette: of this future journey Henrietta felt assured. The regular correspondence kept up with his grandmother, the articles which he now wrote for more than one French paper, formed a link connecting the present with the past—a past that must surely hold some great grief, if not a tragedy, in it; since the mere mention of La Navette, or the sight of a letter bearing a foreign postmark seemed to raise a cloud of sadness to Godwin's brow. At rarer intervals still there would come a look on her uncle's face which Henrietta could not bear to see—a look which she always failed to understand; but beneath which Paul would wince like a person with an unhealed wound inadvertently pressed, a sore suddenly galled. On a foundation slight and fine, as the thread-like clue leading to the heart of a labyrinth, Henrietta built up her fancies; or rather wove them by means of that "*intelletto di amore*," which resides in the heart, not the head.

When the two girls were just seventeen an event occurred

which made Henrietta far more dependent upon Paul's companionship.

One day, very much to Mrs. Godwin's dismay, May suddenly announced that the Misses Swann's teaching was inadequate, and old fashioned, and that no education could be finished properly anywhere excepting in Brussels (by no education May meant her own.)

In vain her mother argued that Miss Lavender was fully competent to teach anybody. May remained deaf to all well-meant advice ; and showed so much determination, not to say obstinacy, that Mrs. Godwin, unaccustomed to opposition in large matters, and completely taken aback by the proposed scheme, presently burst into tears.

"May, what would you do without me ?"

"I should come back in six months time," said May smiling.

"I should miss you apparently more than you would miss me," said her mother in tones of reproach.

May coloured. "I daresay I am selfish, Mamma, but I do want to go abroad so much. I am tired of this stupid village, where nothing ever happens but church on Sundays, and the Misses Swann all the week round, and their old-fashioned lessons. We are like the people in the poem. I am not sure if I can remember the lines correctly, but I know the sense of them," and still smiling she repeated :

"But no!—they rubb'd through yesterday
In their hereditary way,
And we shall rub through, if we can,
To-morrow on the self same plan,
Till death arrive to supersede
For us, vicissitude and need."

"If we can," she repeated, "that's just the rub. Supposing that we can't? or rather supposing that I can't? Mamma, do you mean to keep me here till death meets my 'needs' and 'vicissitudes'?"

"My dear, hush!" said her mother.

"If I don't say it I shall think it, Mamma. It would be different if we could go away as cousin Evelyn does, or yacht with cousin Sol, and uncle John : but we are mewed up here all the year round. We are no better off than the villagers. Mamma, do you mean to stay here always?"

"Really, my dear, I have not thought about it."

"Well, I have," said May, "and I do not mean to remain in Godwin's Worthy much longer, if I can help it. I do wish, dear Mamma, that you would try to look at the matter from my point of view, I do so hate to be made to feel selfish."

This was the sum total of May's reasoning. She was not without affections, but so far they lingered in the background of the little stage, created by her own personality; while her will, filling all the foreground, had never yet received a check.

It never occurred to Mrs. Godwin that the education which was not good enough for one daughter, should also be insufficient for the other. May declared that Henrietta was far too clever already; besides, the expense had to be taken into consideration. Spoiled child that she was, May gained her own way, and started for Brussels within a month of first making her proposition, taking her farewells very light-heartedly, her whole mind being full of excitement over the complete change, and the prospect of foreign life.

Once abroad, she made great friends with another English girl, a Miss Strafford, who was at the same school, and whose mother, the widow of a general, lived in a pretty villa just outside the town. Next, by an odd coincidence, Mrs. Strafford turned out to be a distant cousin of Lady Evelyn's, and Mrs. Godwin felt very well pleased when May received an invitation to spend her short holidays with these new friends. The mode of life suited the girl exactly, and she seemed in no hurry to return to England.

During May's absence Henrietta drew closer to Paul than ever. On his return home for the vacation she had never once failed to meet him at the old favourite spot beneath the Dryad's oak. The little pink chestnut which she herself had planted was a tall tree now, yearly covered with blossoms, and long after outgrowing other childish habits, her fondness for the old traditions still lingered.

Over Henrietta's head time passed quickly and her eighteenth birthday drew near. Stately, slender, and fair, she grew up, as the tall Mary lilies in her uncle's garden: that is to say, fair skinned, for her eyes were black-lashed, deep and soft as a midsummer sky at night; and her hair, of rare auburn, all gold in the sunshine, all black in the shadow, framed her face in a glory of its own. In a word Henrietta was beautiful: beautiful with a strange haunting loveliness of form and feature. Nature had given to her a face whose pure curves and delicate colouring would be apt to linger in

the memory like the thought of spring flowers in winter, of April sunshine, of the scent of roses. A face once met with, never to be forgotten. In the village of Godwin's Worthy the very cottagers gazed after her with a smile. Even the curate of the parish, in his conventional calls on Mrs. Godwin, sometimes faltered in his speech when the girl's dark eyes met his. Such unconscious eyes they were too, for Henrietta was still a child at heart, and would see nothing of society till her sister came home again.

May's return had been put off no less than three times. With some difficulty, on leaving school, she obtained permission to travel in the Black Forest with Mrs. and Miss Strafford. Then her stay must be prolonged as her girl friend was about to be married: next the wedding was delayed owing to an unexpected death in the family of the bridegroom. Her lengthened absence bade fair to exhaust Mrs. Godwin's patience. However, the last week in April brought a letter from the traveller, fixing the date of her return for the end of next month. A convenient escort had offered itself in the person of one of the governesses from the German school, Fräulein Sandkatze, a middle aged lady of irreproachable manners. Henrietta waited eagerly for her sister's return. Life at Godwin's Worthy had been very uneventful during the past year. Lady Evelyn called the village Sleepy Hollow! and the name was not an inappropriate one, though a new line of railway now being laid in the little valley promised to make the place livelier; to the satisfaction of the rising generation, and the discontent of some of the older residents. In the absence of other distractions, Henrietta had half a dozen hobby horses, and rode them hard. Gardening she loved, and music seemed to exercise a spell upon her. She improvised in true Italian fashion, and sang beautifully, thanks to Miss Lavender's teaching. She was an omnivorous reader, too, though her library might have been modelled on Joubert's, for Ted Lisle constantly sent her books with any paragraph that displeased him ruthlessly torn out. She never studied the newspapers indiscriminately, since her uncle always read the *Times* aloud at breakfast, and handed it on to his old soldier servant Jeremiah afterwards. For the rest Shakespeare, Sophocles, Burke, Carlyle, and Matthew Arnold; Tennyson, Owen Meredith, Mill, and Charles Lamb; Schiller and Elder, Sainte Beuve, Bossuet, Petrarch and Mazzini; Lear's Nonsense book and the ever loved Hans Andersen, could

all be found side by side on her book-shelf in most admired confusion.

She had even waded dutifully after Paul through a sea of political economy, interspersed with fairy tales it must be confessed by way of relaxation. Possibly her fancy was none the worse for its mingled elements of child and scholar.

Yet nature appealed to her more strongly than books. When out of doors she lived in a kingdom of her own, where no thought of pain or sorrow ever intruded, save through an artistic and idealised medium. Without any sense of loneliness she was often alone; riding her pony through the long glades of the park with Jeremiah pottering after in the far distance; wandering whole days in the woods with Bellissima trotting at her heels; reading and thinking up in the attic, and playing on the old spinet; visiting the realm of sorrow, and sad sometimes in her music, without sadness. Following Beethoven and Schubert, and playing as if in a dream, a part not her own. At such times if Paul were present he would look at her startled, "for we are most near waking when we dream that we dream."

Would such a life as Henrietta's grow to weakness or to strength, Paul sometimes wondered. Except when Mrs. Godwin appeared, the girl was petted and shielded by the whole household, and the reason lay close at hand,—she was the only member of the family whose path no conscious sorrow had ever crossed. Send some small child into the wards of a hospital, and one may be sure that the patients will try to keep every sign of their suffering hidden away—fearful of touching or chilling the small figure of joy, with one shadow of that inevitable pain which falls too soon upon every life. Probably for this cause John Godwin, Paul, Sophie, and Jeremiah all took care of Henrietta. Mrs. Godwin's indifference never yet analysed, fully comprehended or resented by her daughter, represented a palpable injustice to the rest of the household, and roused, in Sophie's breast, much private indignation.

Constantly reproved and under the yoke of Mrs. Godwin's remarks and comments, Henrietta had unconsciously become fearful of ever letting anyone inside the gate of that world where her own mind dwelt so happily—that delightful, barely explored realm of nature and of thought, full of fair visions bathed in sunshine—a land pure and innocent, with no shadows in it darker than those

delicate, palely blue ones, which are cast by one snow bank upon another. This beautiful kingdom was her own, her pet treasure-house of delight and loveliness, through which, wandering at will, one could hardly envy the angels. A fairy land free surely to everybody. It never occurred to Henrietta that anyone would care to share her own little footway through it. The older she grew the more closely she drew a veil of silence, and reserve over her own feelings. Sarcasm withers confidence, and Mrs. Godwin was nearly always gently sarcastic. Therefore the pleasures that came to Henrietta were enjoyed with an intense yet solitary kind of happiness which might have filled any mother's heart with a sense of amazement. For the girl was grown up now, and no one quite realised this fact: she herself least of all. Possibly the full consciousness of her eighteen years might still have lingered awhile on the way, had it not been for one of those small causes from which greater events so often spring.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, when most self exalted, most alone,
Chief dreamer, own thy dream !
Thy brother-world stirs at thy feet unknown ;
Who hath a monarch's path, no brother's part,
Yet doth thine inmost soul with yearning teem :
Oh, what a spasm shakes the dreamer's heart.

M. ARNOLD.

ONE lovely morning early in May, Henrietta started for a walk in company with Bellissima—Bellissima, now old in years, but likely to live some time yet, to judge by appearances. Henrietta wished to spend some hours in the park. The distance to be accomplished was not great; the country road was generally quiet enough, but to-day the way was nearly blocked by a number of covered carts, part of a great show of wild beasts, circus horses, dwarfs, and pygmies travelling to the country town, there to give several performances. A stone in the foot of one of the leading horses necessitating a temporary halt, the caravans had all come to a stand-still opposite the park gates. Passing the carts with Bellissima growling at her heels, Henrietta came presently to the last of

the string. Here two of the horses had turned across the way, and were cropping the fresh grass, and by the open door of this caravan stood a man who had just climbed down into the road. Arrested in her onward progress, the girl stood for a moment waiting, looking, in her white dress, like the very outcome of the spring morning ; but the man stared up at her with a scowl, and she gazed back at him again, fascinated and speechless.

Such a marred, twisted, misshapen semblance of humanity she had never seen before. The head was out of all proportion to the body ; the back hunched, the arms long, lean and skeletonian. But it was not so much the terrible deformity that held the girl spellbound, it was the mocking devil looking out of the eyes now meeting hers—mockery which seemed to show a soul tortured and misshapen as its outer garment.

"If you've a mind to see part of the show without paying anything, I hope you're satisfied," the hunchback remarks.

"I beg your pardon," said Henrietta, involuntarily.

"No offence," he said, swinging his long, lean arms up and down, and chuckling a little. "You're welcome to look, and laugh too, if you've a mind to ; I'm quite used to that sort of thing. I've belonged to travelling caravans, beasts, dwarfs, and such-like for the last fifty years. Not much in your line, anyhow, I reckon."

"What makes you think that ?" said Henrietta.

"Few people care to have a second look at me," he said, "particularly the refined quality like yourself."

Some girls might have turned back now, alarmed at the scarcely veiled insolence of the man's manner, but Henrietta stood still. Tears filled her eyes, while half beneath her breath she said : "I wonder how you have borne it."

A tinge of surprise appeared on the hunchback's face.

"You are eighteen or thereabouts, I suppose," he remarked, "and I am sixty-five. There's a long bit of road atween us, but I was your age once, and creaking wheels last longest. I've travelled it, cursing every step of the way, as you would be like, if you were in my shoes."

"No ! oh, no l!" said Henrietta.

"Yes you would," said he, leaning both arms on the top of the wheel. The mockery had gone from his voice, yet, if possible, his earnestness seemed more horrible than his mockery. "Yes you

would. You wonder how I have borne it, do you? Well I haven't borne it, never shall. The children point at me if I show myself in the streets; it's the caravan over again on a small scale. What's the world ever done for me, I should like to know? Never anything but laugh and jeer, or pity at best: and pity is next door to loathing in my case," Here he shifted his gaze uneasily. Something in the startled, innocent eyes looking at him so compassionately seemed to give the lie to his words. There was a movement among the line of carts too, the leading horses were about to start off again. "The people crack more jokes over me than over anybody else," he went on, "rare jokes; honest farmers and their wives; I've laughed till I've cried to hear them talk, some of them seemed a sight too disgusted to look at what the Almighty was pleased to make. Ah! it's a rare world for the straight ones. What would they say if they changed bodies with my sort once in a while? Curse all the straight ones, say I; and so would you if you were in my place." And here the hunchback climbed up into the cart again, and shut the door, and before Henrietta could frame any sort of answer, the procession disappeared up the road.

Once more left alone, the girl stood for a few minutes absolutely motionless, conscious chiefly of a benumbed feeling. The twisted figure in its mocking uncouthness had the same effect upon her sometimes produced by a vision; it seemed too terrible, and at the same time too transitory to be true.

After a while, pushing open the park gate, she struck across the grass, and made her way to a little coppice, a quiet corner, where few people ever came. She wanted to be alone, yet, for the first time in her young life the very peace and beauty of a spring morning jarred upon her feelings.

The sun was warm on the young beeches, just now coming into leaf, and on the red-tipped fingers of the baby larches, whose velvet-like tufts of bloom drooped downwards to mingle with the golden ranks of the cowslips growing knee-deep in the grass. The great humble bees, drowsy with sweets, were flying heavily from flower to flower; and the deeper undergrowth was wet still with warm dew. It was a day of expanding life, when all winged creatures must surely float, and all nature rejoice.

Henrietta, resting her head for one moment against a lime branch, almost fancied that she could hear the fresh sap racing upwards

to tinge the rose, in the veins of the new-born and delicate leaves. Moving on again, and coming presently to an old thorn tree, she sat down on a low spreading branch, and gave herself up to reflection.

So far there had been no pain in her life, save through her finer sympathies. True she had read of suffering, but the martyrs and saints belonged to that number who "have seen past the agony." Her world had been peopled by figures of acquiescence, and even the sins and sorrows of bygone generations seemed bygone and very far off.

Perhaps most young shielded natures feel like this. It is all very well to read in a history book, to a placidly working governess, that Nero murdered many people; or that celebrities, like Empedocles, tired of life, have leaped down Etna. Children can read of such things without too much of a shock; but some time, into every life there comes an hour when the cold fingers of reality tear down the curtains of our childish dream-world—a world that always has enough to eat and to drink, and never sins, save through an occasional fit of petulance—and then, instead of listening to a set of stories doled out by some old *raconteur*, we take a seat nearer to the stage for the future, to find out that the tragedies go on hand in hand with the farces; and that the characters, no longer shades, are living souls; or more terrible still, we receive our first call to join the performers!

The call-boy had come to Henrietta to-day. The pain and revolt seeming to belong to an ideal world of the past and the dead, now suddenly took shape, rising up in the charmed circle of her life, like some terrible living reality, knitting together the past and the present; forging the link of realisation which binds each unit to the next in the chain of humanity.

Alas for Henrietta! the curtains of her dream-world were torn rudely apart, and all across the sunshine of her own happiness fell now the first dark shadow of the world's misery. The picture thus presented came upon her with the effect of a shock. In her world of acquiescence the hunchback had struck the first note of revolt, open revolt of a kind never before imagined.

Pain, mental and bodily, appeals most forcibly to some of us, when it touches those we love; others, more selfish, care only for that discomfort which is personal in its effects. Life is a pageant, and they sitting on cushions in the stalls look on as spectators.

Mrs. Godwin would have striven to forget the existence of such a being as the hunchback ; failing this his presence would have filled her with a fierce sense of loathing and disgust. But Henrietta was conscious now of a feeling mightier than any loathing. The man's words had struck out all possibility of that. They rang on still in her ears : " What has the world ever done for me ? Nothing but jeer."

Henrietta's glance wandered presently to the blue of the sky, to the straight limbed trees, the happy birds, the delicate-winged butterflies that flitted amongst the May bloom ; all rejoicing, all perfect in beauty. Could she curse them all, she to whom nature had ever been a true mother, she who loved these things—the movement of the corn, the shiver of the wind among the beeches, the whisper of the rushes, the murmur of the river, the music of the swans' wings—she who could so truly say :

" I have friends in spirit land,
Not shadows in a shadowy band.
Not others, but themselves are they."

It could not lessen her suffering, did the whole world suffer in concert ; but what must be the sum-total of pain in the universe, since the affliction of one man alone seemed so terrible.

In the midst of all this loveliness there swept over her for the first time an agony of regret, a sense of unmeasured desolation. The world was not less beautiful, it seemed more so ; but the silent sorrow in it had suddenly found a voice, and called for her recognition ; while the very loveliness of the morning thrust home the sharpness of the contrast.

What if she, too, were numbered amongst those upon whom hope's gates were for ever closed ?

Shutting out the sunshine, she hid her face in her hands and burst into tears. What if she, too, were deformed and ugly, and poor, and her very deformity made a public langhing stock, for this world's scorn to point at. What if the fiat had gone forth, and she, too, stood marred and twisted, one of a company, " with wounds and disfigurements, as of those who hang upon crosses." The hunchback, conquered by the ill of a deformity, was yet a man—flesh and blood like herself—an embodiment of pain, too, and a cry of revolt. Mocking his own misery, rejecting the material given, he had mutilated his life to match it. But must all life, when so weighted, run captive ever, and in chains.

As if in answer to this thought, a puff of wind floated by laden with the scent of May blossom. Henrietta looked up now, dashing away her tears, glancing at the tree, amid whose profusion of flowers she had found a seat. There is such a wealth in May bloom, even in one branch ; and this little tree, crooked and twisted, distorted and bent, covered over with rough lichen, and beaten by the weather, showed yet a mantle of white stars, and every star bore a crown of stamens.

Slowly as a sunbeam creeps over a shadow, a smile crept over her face. Those who call nature cruel have never loved her in sincerity ; to her own children she is very pitiful. As Henrietta sat musing, the cool wind fanned her cheek, and cradled between those twisted branches, her spirit, re-baptised, passed out through the portals of suffering, through the drifts of the flowers, on to the measureless calm of the blue.

What if into this other life, marred and twisted though it might be, the touch of helping hands had come ? By a natural association of ideas, Henrietta's thoughts went presently to Ted Lisle. True, his burden was a light one when compared with the hunchback's, yet he, too, might easily have been a hopeless cripple, had not love and skill watched over him from the first day of his accident. His life had been so guarded and cared for during the past few years, that, though he could never be able to take any violent exercise, or to join in field sports, he had by this time discarded his crutches, and was able to go about much like other people ; indeed there was some talk of his spending the next winter in England. Yet, all through the years when he had lain on his back, all through his tedious convalescence he had seemed carelessly and completely oblivious of his crippled state, where most natures might pardonably have winced and agonised again and again. Ted would never have cursed "all the straight ones" either. Henrietta could easily fancy him saying that it would be too much trouble. During his Eton and Cambridge days, and even as an invalid, the family motto, *Sans Souci*, had stuck to him as a nickname. He was often called by it still. Yet, to-day, a great desire came over Henrietta to find out if Ted were always as light-hearted as he seemed to be. During the past hour the whole movement of her world had been reversed by a mighty lever of pain and pity. A shadow had crept into her Eden, and life could never be the same again, while all

those others suffered outside. True, the hunchback had cursed all the straight ones, but she could not give back scorn for scorn, when the pain lying behind the curse had bared itself to her pity. For all tortured, troubled humanity, in the heart of the girl as she sat alone, there was nothing but love to-day. For the first time even Mrs. Godwin's personality was temporarily banished and swept into the background. Unknown to herself, every incident in Henrietta's past had been tending towards this moment. From the sunlight, the sky, the air, the flowers; from the accumulated treasure of years, gathered in from her babyhood; tapped now by one fierce touch, the spring at her heart welled up in a fountain, carrying all before it. Not to receive, Henrietta longed, but to give, to give inexhaustibly.

(To be continued.)

The Betrothal of Mary Coniston.

By E. WHITE.

CHAPTER I.

"IN HONOUR BOUND."

IT was between the acts of a Wagnerian opera, in the theatre of a well-known German garrison town. Most of the audience had disappeared, and were promenading in the corridors and foyer; and all the first circle boxes were empty, with one exception, and in this, conversing earnestly, there still remained an English girl of great and striking beauty, and a tall distinguished-looking man, who, although wearing the uniform of a German cavalry officer, had a decidedly British appearance.

"Yes, Mary," he was saying in a low voice, "it is to-morrow we fight."

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed, flushing slightly. "So soon as that? But what made you quarrel with Heinrich, Walther?"

"Oh, I thought I had told you," he answered quickly. "The quarrel was none of my seeking; to tell the truth it was his jealousy. He cannot endure my being so often with you, I understand.

Therefore he took the first opportunity of insulting me before my brother officers, and in so doing, called the honour of the regiment into question, and that, of course, brought matters to a climax."

"I wonder what right he has to be jealous," she said, with a curl of her beautiful lip. "I suppose he thinks because I went through that foolish betrothal ceremony* that I actually belong to him, which I do not, and—" she hesitated.

"And what?" he asked eagerly.

"I never shall," she continued, determinedly. "I did what they persuaded me to do, but it was in ignorance. I did not know my own heart then; but I know it now."

"If you repudiate him it will kill Heinrich," he said under his breath, "and you cannot, Mary; the betrothal binds you."

"It does not, it does not," she interrupted impatiently. "I am English, and to me it is not binding. He must find someone else to love and rave over. There are plenty of others."

"Plenty of others, it is true," he said quietly; "but none like you, Mary."

She smiled brightly; she was well accustomed to flattery, and heeded it little; but this compliment pleased her, for it came from the man she loved.

"Although I know it is not true," she said gently, "I am happy that you think it so, Walther." And she lifted the long lashes which veiled her large brown eyes, and looking up full into his face, added, "But this duel—I cannot help thinking of it. I should like to know it was over—safely over."

"You may rest assured, Mary," he answered promptly, "that it will end safely, as far as he is concerned. I shall fire into the air. My mother, as you know, was an Englishwoman; she brought me up to hate these duels; but a German officer cannot, under any circumstances, refuse to fight when challenged. I shall fire into the air."

"Fire into the air?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I could not endure to have a man's life upon my hands; it would seem to me too much like murder."

"But your life, Walther? Think—he would not hesitate to take yours."

* In Germany the betrothal ceremony is regarded as binding as the marriage rite, which it usually precedes.

"Perhaps," he said, doubtfully; "but that is not the point. I have only myself to answer for, and therefore my life is of little consequence. I shall fire into the air."

"I would give years and years of my life," she said slowly, as if speaking to herself and unconscious of his presence, "if I were once more free—free of this horrid bond. It seems terrible if it is really so binding, and especially when—" and now she spoke almost in a whisper, "when I might have been so happy."

"Dear Mary," and his voice shook, and the hand that rested upon the hilt of his sword trembled, "as it is for you, so it is for me. When that day you told me of your betrothal it broke my heart, but even with love and hope dead, I still pray I may live out my life worthily to its end."

"A man may live without hope and love, a woman cannot—remember, a woman cannot," she murmured bitterly.

He saw the tears gather in her eyes, and he felt a strange huskiness, which prevented any attempt to reply, and silence fell upon them both. But it was soon broken by the sound of voices; the musicians commenced to take their seats, and slowly the auditorium began to refill. The Frau General, in whose house the English fraulein had been living for nearly two years past, and who had accompanied her, according to custom, to the theatre, now joined them with her little fair-haired daughter in the box.

"Oh! Frau General, you are in good time," Mary Coniston exclaimed, throwing herself back in her chair and assuming a cheerful attitude. "The curtain will not rise for three minutes yet. Herr Hauptmann, you see, has been entertaining me in your absence. We have been talking English. This is the last act, and I am thankful, for I am feeling very tired." Then turning to the officer, she said, "Good-night, Herr Hauptmann;" adding in a low voice, "Think of my misery to-morrow, and do not fire into the air."

* * * *

Walther never knew exactly how it happened, but when he stood face to face with Heinrich, her last words rang in his ears like a command, and before he fired he took deliberate aim. So unerring was his aim, that, when he looked again, he saw his adversary lying stretched upon the ground, and for one terrible moment he believed him to be dead. And now that it was over, all that followed

seemed to him like a dream, too terrible to recall, too hideous to be true. The lifting up of the unconscious man, the blood from a frightful wound in the face just between the eyes, flowing over his hands—the hands that had shed it,—the drive to the hospital, his confession to the military authorities, and afterwards his meeting with his comrades, the mockery it had been to him to hear their warm commendation at his having so successfully upheld the honour of the regiment.

News of the injured man had reached him—he lived, but was in a most critical state, and even if skill and care should save his life, his sight would be lost to him for ever.

And then, as he sat alone, brooding over this in hopeless despair, a letter was brought to him from Mary, in which she congratulated him upon his safety, but never a word of that other—the victim, lying in terrible suffering and darkness.

Oh ! she must be cruel and heartless, indeed ; cruel and heartless beyond conception. Could he still love her ? still continue to love her, knowing this ? What were beauty of face and form without beauty of soul ?

Yet, as his eye fell upon the photograph she had enclosed within the note, he knew that he loved her as wildly and as passionately as ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLEDGE REDEEMED.

“ Mariechen, come to me, let me feel your hand in mine. Mariechen, you will still love me though I am blind—Mariechen—my Mariechen ? ”

These were the words dictated to the nurse by the unfortunate Heinrich von Armbrecht, when at last he recovered consciousness. The little piece of paper was despatched to Mary Coniston by a trusted messenger, and put into her hands that same day. And he waited and waited for the answer that never came ; and then again he sent to her, and still always no reply.

“ Mariechen,” he wrote once more, by the hand of the nurse, “ Can it be you will not come, that you do not love me any longer, because I am blind, disfigured ? Is this why you remain away, my

beloved, my betrothed, my own? But remember in life or death you still belong to me. I will never part from you nor give you up to him. No, never! never! Death, I know, is near me; but do not think that means release for you. No, love is stronger than death—such love as mine. My weakness binds me down now, so that I cannot come to you; but death will set me free, and in that hour I will come for you, and you shall be mine for ever beyond the grave."

Mary Coniston shuddered as she read these words in spite of herself, in spite of the reflection that they were those of a man whose brain was weakened, and intellect consequently shattered by continuous and intense suffering. But she resolved to leave Germany at once, and return to her friends in England, where she knew Walther would join her, after the short period of detention in a fortress expired, to which, as a matter of form, he had been condemned by the Court Martial, for what the men who composed it considered a perfectly admirable act, rather than an offence, and in no sense whatever a crime.

* * * *

At the expiration of three months Walther's hour of release came, and his first act was to leave the army, where he felt life would be intolerable now. Large property had been left to him by a distant relative in England, and thither he immediately repaired, and shortly after became engaged to Mary Coniston.

Heinrich was still detained in the hospital, suffering greatly, and quite blind, with death creeping upon him slowly but surely.

Mary thought no more of him; she did not even answer the imploring, indignant letter she had received from the sister, who loved him; and she smiled at the threat of retribution it contained. What retribution could reach her; and after all what evil had she done that she should merit it? she asked herself. Could it be expected that she, beautiful and rich, the desired of all, should sacrifice herself for the sake of one who had become blind and disfigured, a helpless invalid? Surely he never could have loved her, to even wish that such a thing could be.

The wedding day drew near. Mary Coniston, ever since her return to England, had been staying in the country with her uncle, who was squire of the village, and from whose house she was to be married.

Proud of the beauty of his niece, her uncle, who was rich and a

bachelor, resolved to give a grand ball in her especial honour, to celebrate the approaching marriage. It was fixed to take place upon the last day of July, and when the night arrived it proved a perfectly ideal one for such an occasion.

The dancing proceeded vigorously until twelve o'clock, when the musicians, having retired for rest and refreshment, the guests promenaded through the gardens, or lingered about the terrace, upon which the long French windows of the ball-room opened. Mary, the belle of the ball, had escaped from a crowd of admirers, that she might be for a few moments alone with Walther. They strolled into the deserted ball-room, and, as they stood together in the brilliant light of many gaseliers, he proudly gazed upon her beautiful face, and the loveliness of her form in its clinging white dress, little dreaming it was for the last time. He thought of the hour when he had seen her first, three years ago, in the old Museum Hall, in the far away German town, where he had loved and won her. He forgot the terrible thing that had happened there, and how it had come about that she was plighted to him now, and remembered only the happy days they had passed together. Some inexplicable impulse moved him to ask her to sing the German song which had been his favourite then.

At his request she seated herself at the piano, and touching the keys with the skill and ease of the fine musician she was, played the melody over softly, then, as she broke into song, the sounds of merriment without ceased, and all the guests crowded into the room to listen.

She sang wonderfully, with the true sympathetic power that the singing of such a song needed; but when she came to the third verse a sudden pause ensued, and starting up, she seized the hand of Walther, and pointed towards the window facing them, out into the night. Her face had turned ashen white, she trembled violently—her teeth chattered.

"Walther," she cried, "Look—there—there. It is he—Heinrich! Heinrich! Oh, hold me, hold me fast. He will take me. Hold me—hold me fast—fast. Oh! Walther—fast—fast!"

She threw her arms around him wildly, and clung to him with all her strength, at the same time that she gave utterance to a fearful shriek, paralysing with awe and horror the hearts of all the assembled guests, who had crowded round her. But they did not

see what the lovers saw, the figure of a man standing just within the window, dressed only in a shirt, a white bandage across his eyes, his arms stretched out towards her, the thin emaciated fingers of his long hands spread out, and a plain gold ring glittering upon the third finger;* and the sound of the low hollow voice did not reach their ears, calling:

"Mariechen! Mariechen!"

Walther drew her close to him. He held her with all his strength, no mortal man could have wrested her from him; but it was not with mortal power he had to combat now.

"Darling," he whispered, "it is but fancy. Do not be afraid, I can—" he broke off. Her grasp had suddenly relaxed, her eyes, which were strained fixedly towards the place where the figure had stood, but which he saw no longer, had a strange, fixed stare in them. He could not feel her breathe, she lay quite white and still, her hands were growing cold; the awful truth forced itself upon him—Mary Coniston had gone with Heinrich, her plighted troth had been redeemed; it was a corpse he held within his arms. The horror of it overpowered him, and he fell senseless to the floor.

* * * *

The day following, when she was lying dead, a telegram reached the mansion for Mary Coniston.

He opened it, and read thus:

"On the 31st, a few minutes after midnight, my brother Heinrich died with your name upon his lips."—Olga von Armbrecht.

* * * *

Walther left England. He sought for peace of mind—sought it everywhere—in foreign, far distant lands, but in vain. At last, in the quiet of the Swiss hills, in a lonely monastery, among the holy men who had devoted their lives to God, he believed that he had found it. But, although only thirty, he was grey-haired and quite broken down when, the year after, death came to him, and the kind-hearted fraternity buried him in their little cemetery, just outside the monastery walls.

* In Germany the engagement ring is worn on the third finger of the left hand, and the marriage ring on the third finger of the right hand, just reversing the English custom. [ED. note.]

Charlotte de la Tremouille,

COUNTESS OF DERBY.

By A. M. JUDD,

Author of "DON CARLOS," "JIMMY'S CHOICE," etc., etc.

MANY celebrated women have borne the title of Countess of Derby, but not one more celebrated or worthy of all honour than Charlotte, daughter of Claude, Duc de la Tremouille, and Charlotte, his wife. This latter lady was a daughter of the famous William the Silent, Count of Nassau and Prince of Orange.

She was born near Poitou in 1601, and the babe who then first saw the light of day had ancestors who were allied to the Kings of France, and the Houses of Bourbon-Montpensier, Bourbon-Condé, the Dukes of Anjou, the Kings of Naples and Sicily, the Archdukes of Austria, the Kings of Spain, the Earls and Dukes of Savoy, the Dukes of Milan, and several other sovereign princes, for her maternal grandmother, the wife of William of Orange, was Charlotte de Bourbon.

Notwithstanding that opportunities for acquiring knowledge were few in those days, little Charlotte, at the age of six, according to Madame de Witt, was a prodigy, and wrote the following letter to her mother on an occasion when she had gone on a long journey :

"Madame,—Since you went away I have become very good. Thank God you will find me quite learned. I know seventeen Psalms, all the quatrains of Picbrac ; all the Mutains of Jamaniel, and above all I can talk Latin. My little brother is so pretty, he could not be prettier ; when visitors come he is quite enough to entertain them. It seems, Madame, a very long time since we saw you. Pray love me. Madame de S. Christophe says you are well, for which I thanked God. I pray to God for you. Humbly kiss the hands of my good aunt and my little cousins. I am, Madame, your very humble and very obedient and good daughter, CHARLOTTE DE TREMOUILLE."

Rather a curious epistle for a child of six to write. What a model of all the virtues this little girl must have been ! Fancy a child of the

present day "humbly kissing the hands of aunt and cousins," or signing herself "your humble, obedient and good daughter."

Charlotte's amiability must have been great, for she was a general favourite, and received many beautiful presents on different occasions from relatives and friends. The Prince of Orange sent her three dozen ruby and pearl buttons on one of her birthdays, and on another the Princess, his wife, presented her with a carcanet of diamonds and rubies, and a cousin gave her a dress of silver tissue, which is described as having been peculiarly beautiful and costly.

It was while staying at the Hague in 1620, that Charlotte first met Lord James Strange, and the young couple were mutually attracted towards each other; the handsome young Englishman being much struck by her *esprit* and beauty, while she secretly admired him for his gallantry and sweet disposition.

They were not married until 1626, and many of the bride-maidens envied Lady Strange on that bright wedding-day, for the groom was handsome and amiable, as well as heir to vast possessions in Lancashire, and no one foresaw then the heavy burden of sorrow which was to fall to the lot of the fair bride. Lord James was described as the eldest son of the Earl of d'Herbie.

The Earl was then living at Chester; so when the newly-married couple arrived in England, he established them at Lathom House. This spot, famous as the place so long defended against the parliamentary forces, and the last in the kingdom to yield to Cromwell's troops, is near Ormskirk, in the county of Lancashire, and is rich in historical interest. The house was enclosed by strong walls two yards thick. Upon these walls were nine towers flanking each other, and in every tower were pieces of ordnance. Without was a moat, eight yards wide and two deep. Upon the bank of the moat, between the wall and the grass, a row of strong palisades was planted, and in the midst of the house, surmounting all these, was a strong, high tower, called the Eagle Tower, from which a constant watch was kept over the surrounding country for many miles. The gatehouse also was a massive building, and on the walls and the towers were places for marksmen, who could pick off attacking foes and thin their ranks.

A more modern residence now stands upon the site of the old mansion, and though an imposing pile, distinct traces of the older building still exist; while, it is said, some ghastly relics of the long siege were

brought to light in the grounds not many years ago. These relics took the shape of five skeletons, bringing the number of those slain *inside* the defended position up to seven. One of these skeletons was, no doubt, that of the gigantic follower of Lady Derby, who met his death by a bullet, which found its mark in Jan's neck, he "havinge putte ye head over ye wall."

Lathom House, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, stood on flat, marshy ground, its surroundings being very different from the cultivated acres which now enclose the house, its situation, massive encompassing wall, and fortified towers, making it a place well calculated to resist an obstinate and prolonged siege. The Manor of Lathom, and part of the present Knowsley estate became the property of Sir John Stanley, knight, about the year 1414, on his marriage with Isabel Lathom.

When Charlotte de la Tremouille first came to England after the celebration of the brilliant marriage arranged for her, and began her new life in her husband's old, historic house, she little dreamed of the troubles in store, or of the heavy burden of sorrow that would fall to her lot. The early years of her married life, however, seem to have been perfectly happy, her husband being entirely devoted to her.

The birth of her first child was, of course, a very important affair, and in writing of it, Lady Strange, as she then was, tells of the grand and formal ceremony attending its baptism, when the infant was carried by four ladies, the wives of knights, and the Archbishop of Chester officiated, while Charles I. sent a set of costly christening cups, and the young mother received from the Duchess of Richmond a beautiful turquoise bracelet.

In all, Charlotte bore her husband six children, three sons and three daughters: Charles Lord Strange; Edward and William; Mary, who married William, Earl of Strafford; Catherine, who espoused Henry, Marquis of Dorset; and Amelia, who became Countess of Athol.

Though in the first part of their married life Charlotte and her husband seemed to have resided chiefly at Lathom, they possessed another historic residence in the Isle of Man, and indeed the whole island belonged to them. The aforementioned Sir John Stanley, knight, being sent to seize the island in the reign of Henry IV. (upon the forfeiture of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, by his rebel-

lion) had it given to him by the King, Henry allowing Sir John to be styled King of Man, and his successors were so called, down to Thomas, second Earl of Derby, after which either "modesty or policy made them call themselves only Lords of Man." It is said they thought it more honourable to be great lords than petty kings.

The tenure of this valuable property depended upon a very trifling act of homage, and the presentation to His Majesty of some birds to be used in falconry. According to Dugdale it was "a grant in fee of the same isle, castle and pile, and all the isles adjacent, as also all the regalities, franchises and all rights thereunto belonging, and patronage of the bishopric there, to be held of the King, his heirs and successors, by homage and the service of two falcons, payable on the days of their coronation."

James Stanley was called to parliament by writ in 1627, the third year of the reign of Charles I. From that time, to his death in 1651, the government of the Isle of Man was administered by him, and he proved one of the most faithful of the King's adherents, for he was one of the first who joined Charles at York, when His Majesty was obliged to repair there, on account of the disturbances and dangerous tumults at Westminster.

Being ordered back to Lancashire to prepare for the impending struggle, he set up his standard at Warrington, and mustered the whole country on three heaths near Bury, Ormskirk and Preston, enlisting men at each place.

The standard was then set up at Nottingham, but the "counties not coming in as freely as expected, the King, by special letters, desired his lordship to raise what men he could and hasten to him."

He raised amongst his tenants, dependents, and private friends, three troops of horse, and three regiments of foot soldiers, arming and clothing them at his own cost, and posted them at Shrewsbury to await the King's commands; at the same time he placed a large sum of money at his sovereign's disposal.

The party then sitting in Parliament at Westminster offered him immense bribes to quit the Kingdom, to which attempts to corrupt his loyalty he made answer: "When I turn traitor I may hearken to these propositions, but till then, let me have no more of these papers, at the peril of him who brings them."

In 1643, the towns of Lancaster and Preston having been garrisoned by the enemy, the earl began to strengthen the fortifica-

tions at Lathom, at the same time doing his best to raise troops for the King, and while thus occupied he heard that the Scotch had a design upon the Isle of Man. Almost immediately after he received an express message from Charles, telling him that a plan had been formed to seize the Isle, and that without his speedy care, it would be lost, and beseeching him, for the security of the place, to hasten thither at once.

Upon perusing these despatches, he said to the Countess, "My heart! My enemies have now their will, having prevailed with his Majesty to order me to the Isle of Man, as a softer banishment from his presence and their malice."

He knew how to obey, however, never disputed the King's command, and went thither, first making necessary provisions of "men, moneys, and ammunition, for the protection and defence of his incomparable lady at Lathom, to whose charge he committed his children, house, and other English concerns.

Soon after her lord's departure for the Isle of Man, Charlotte refused a demand to give up Lathom House. She remained a prisoner within its precincts until February, 1644, when, on the 28th day of that month, the siege began, and was carried on with vigour by the attacking party. The building was most heroically defended by the besieged until the 27th or 29th day of May in the same year. The assault was directed by General Sir Thomas Fairfax, assisted by Colonels Egerton, Holerose, Ashford, and an engineer, one Major Morgan.

Towards the close of the month Colonel Rigby thought fit to withdraw his forces and march to Bolton. During the three months this intrepid Countess of Derby defended Lathom House, assisted by Major Farmer and Captains Farrington, Charnock, Ogle, Rosthern, Chifenhall, Molineux, and Radcliffe. Aided by the valour and noble conduct of these gentlemen, she made such a good defence that the enemy was forced to raise the siege.

The Countess made her own retainer's list. She chose six Captains for their courage and integrity, desiring them to instruct and train her men, as they were unfit for martial service, and they received all their orders from Major Farmer, whom she had made Major of the house, whilst he in turn received his orders from her Ladyship. Farmer was a Scotchman, very skilful in the "art of war," having served in the low countries for some years, and was known as

a gallant and worthy man. He was afterwards killed at the battle of Marston Moor, when serving under Colonel Chifenhall.

The Countess of Derby had all the affairs of the house managed with great privacy and caution, allowing no one to go out of the gates, save those she could thoroughly trust, and upon whose honour she could rely. The officers and men-at-arms she so effectually concealed, that, when the enemy approached the house, they anticipated no resistance except from her own servants.

On the 28th February, Sir Thomas Fairfax sent a trumpeter and a gentleman of "quality" to desire a friendly interview with the Countess, which was granted, and the General came from Ormskirk to Lathom, and was civilly received by Charlotte. However, the Countess, who feared a sudden assault or surprise, had her soldiers drawn up in good order under their respective officers; the main guard in the first court, down to the great hall, where Sir Thomas Fairfax was to be received; the rest of the men were posted on the tops of the towers and along the walls, in a manner which made them appear more numerous than they really were. After a few words of greeting, the General informed her that he was commanded by the Parliament "to reduce that House to their obedience, and that he was commissioned to offer her Ladyship an honourable and safe removal with her children, servants, and all her goods (arms and cannon only excepted) to her Lord's house at Knowsley, and that she should enjoy one moiety of her Lord's estate in all places of England, for the support of herself and children."

The Countess spiritedly replied that she was left there under a double trust, one of faith and loyalty to her Lord, the other of allegiance and duty to her King, and that she would not yield the house until she had their consent to do so; for if she did it would be a manifest breach of trust to both, and she begged for a month in which to learn their good pleasure, adding, she would quietly yield if they so willed it, and begging him to excuse her for endeavouring to preserve her honour and obedience, though to her own ruin.

Sir Thomas Fairfax replied that, "it exceeded his commission to give her Ladyship any further respite for consideration than that one day," and so departed, noticing as he went the strength and situation of the house, and the masterly way in which the soldiers were disposed.

After the expiration of fourteen days, Fairfax and his officers resolved upon a close siege, and a trumpeter was sent with a summons for the surrender of Lathom House. To which the Countess returned the following answer: "That, as she had not lost her regard for the Church of England, nor her allegiance to her Prince, or her faith to her Lord, she could not, therefore, as yet give up that house; that they must never hope to gain it till she had either lost all these, or her life in defence of them."

Incensed at this answer, the besiegers pushed forward the siege with "great spite and malice," but the defenders were alert and gallant, and beat the enemy from their trenches several times, while a sally was made on the 12th of March, 1644, when about sixty of the Parliamentary soldiers were killed, and nearly as many more were made prisoners.

After this the besiegers doubled their levies about the house, and made a fresh trench close to the moat, wherein they placed a huge mortar-friese, sent from London, "from which they cast about fifty stones of fifteen inches diameter into the house; also grenades (bombshells) of the same size, the first of which, falling near the place where the lady and her children with all the commanders were sat at dinner, shivered all the room, but hurt nobody."

Finding this unpleasant, the heroic Countess ordered a sally, which was successfully executed by the garrison, who made themselves masters of the trenches, and "nailed up" or overturned the enemy's cannon, which they rolled into the moat, bringing the mortar-friese into the house.

During this sharp and sanguinary engagement the Countess was without the gates, sometimes quite close to the trenches, encouraging her soldiers by her presence, and displaying a manly courage, worthy of all admiration in her obstinate and determined defence. But the following night the enemy re-possessed themselves of the trenches, and the siege was continued with unabated vigour.

In the meantime the Earl of Derby, hearing of his wife's perilous position, hastened from the Isle of Man, and implored the King to relieve his distressed lady and children; whereupon his Majesty gave orders to Prince Rupert, who had just gained a victory over Cromwell's troops at Newark, to march through Lancashire on his way to the relief of York.

Colonel Rigby, fearing to encounter the Prince, raised the siege

and marched with his two thousand men to Bolton, when, with another thousand of horse and foot soldiers, he opposed Prince Rupert. On the 28th of May, 1644, the town was taken, no quarter being given. The victory was chiefly due to the energy and courage of the Earl of Derby, and Prince Rupert sent Sir Richard Lane, with all the colours taken there, to the Countess of Derby, who received them with pride, and had them hung up in Lathom House.

Later on in this same year the Earl returned to the Isle of Man, taking Charlotte and his children with him, where they spent a short time in peaceful happiness together, with their sons and daughters around them. But in 1645, when Lathom House was again besieged, we find the intrepid Countess once more defending her home against the enemy, her best marksmen placed in the towers to pick off the besiegers, her faithful retainers encouraged by the coolness and courage of this brave woman, who never shrank from exposing herself to the same risks that her soldiers ran, and who frequently appeared on the ramparts, never daunted or dismayed, but who encouraged and cheered all within the precincts of Lathom House.

Indeed, Charlotte de la Tremouille showed the skill of a general officer, and unparalleled bravery, for Lathom House was not yielded to the Parliamentary forces until Charles I. ordered her to surrender, and there were only 209 foot soldiers left in it, and all the horses but five had been eaten by the starving garrison.

The Earl and Countess then retired to the Isle of Man, but for some inexplicable reason their children did not go with them. After a while the younger members of the family were allowed to go to Knowsley by Sir Francis Fairfax, who behaved well to them; but after twelve months, by an order of "bloody" President Bradshaw, they were all made prisoners and taken to Liverpool, their father being informed that if he would yield the Isle of Man they would be set free. He declined, sacrificing his parental feelings to his sense of duty, and they were kept prisoners for eighteen months.

In 1649, when the Earl was summoned by Ireton to surrender the Isle of Man, he returned this famous answer:

"I received your letter with indignation, and with scorn return you this answer: that I cannot but wonder whence you should gather any hopes that I should prove, like you, treacherous to my sovereign, since you cannot be ignorant of my former actions in his

late Majesty's service, from which principles of loyalty I am no whit departed; I abhor your treason and am so far from delivering up this Island to your advantage, that I shall keep it to the utmost of my power to your destruction. Take this for your final answer and forbear any farther solicitations, for, if you trouble me with any more messages of this nature, I will burn the paper and hang up the bearer. This is the immutable resolution, and shall be the undoubted practice, of him who accounts it his chiefest glory to be

His Majesty's most loyal and obedient servant,

Castletown, 12th July, 1649.

DERBY."

Situated some seven miles from Liverpool is Knowsley Park, another residence of the Earls of Derby, and which, though not so rich in historical interest as Lathom House, claims attention, as it is now the family residence of the Stanleys. It stands in a magnificent park, full of grand old forest monarchs. There are several lodges guarding the entrance to the Park, the chief of these being quite an imposing structure, and the quaint inscription "Bring good news and knock boldly," greets the visitor there.

For many centuries a splendid mansion has stood in this place, but the ninth Earl of Derby began to build the present magnificent structure, which was finally completed about 1820. There is a memorial on its south façade to Earl James and Charlotte, setting forth the cruel and ungrateful treatment they received at the hands of the "Merrie Monarch" Charles II.—"James, Earl of Derby, Lord of Man and the Isles, grandson of James, Earl of Derby, and Charlotte, daughter of Claude, Duc de la Tremouille, whose husband James, was beheaded at Bolton, 1651, for strenuously adhering to Charles II., who refused a Bill, passed unanimously by both houses of Parliament, for restoring to the family the estates lost by his loyalty to him (1732)."

The Stanleys have a splendid collection of pictures here, a series of family portraits well worthy of being studied by anyone interested in the history of the brave Charlotte, and which include some masterpieces of Rembrandt and Rubens. A portrait of the Earl painted by Vandyck is still in the possession of the family, while a fine portrait of the Countess by Rubens was in the possession of the Earl of Essex.

Notwithstanding the great wealth of the seventh Earl of Derby, James, while he was Lord Strange, and Charlotte his wife, in the

early days of their married life seem often to have been very much pressed for money, and unable to meet their liabilities through "delayed payments of moneys."

Of course all this was altered after his father's death, and he seems to have kept up an amount of state and magnificence, like his ancestors, that ran perilously near equalling his sovereign. A princely establishment was kept up at Lathom House. Burke, remarking on it says, "It surpassed for magnificence and hospitality all the residences of the North, assuming in these respects the attitude of a Royal Court, and its owners were so esteemed that the following inversion was often heard: "God save the Earl of Derby and the King."

The Earl's household, family and retainers, amounted to no less than a hundred and twenty souls. Naturally such a household required a large amount of food, and the family house accounts state that every week the consumption was one ox, twenty sheep, fifteen hogsheads of beer, besides venison, game and fish, while thirteen and a half tuns of wine were consumed in twelve months. "How have the mighty fallen," might have sighed the poor Countess in later years, when her gallant husband had given his life for his king, and she was alone, sad, desolate, and poor.

It was the selfishness of Charles II. that led to this noble pair's downfall and destruction. Charles, disappointed that the Scots did not join his army in great numbers, sent a dispatch to the Earl summoning him to England, and requesting him to meet him at Lancaster on the way to Worcester. His Lordship, always ready to serve his prince, left the Isle of Man, where hitherto he had maintained his independence, and brought with him three hundred retainers who had been with him in the Island. He also levied forces in Cheshire and Lancashire, and then marched towards the rendezvous. Unfortunately he was met by a strong detachment of the Parliamentary army, under Colonel Lilburn, in Wigan Lane, and being surrounded by a force far greater than his own, had to fight at terrible disadvantage. He had two horses killed under him, and received several wounds, but at last by dint of desperate valour he cut his way through the Roundheads, and managed to reach Wigan, where he lay concealed in a house for some time. Having got his wounds dressed he struggled on to Worcester.

In the meantime the king arrived at that city, tired and weary

with a forced and hasty march, to find to his dismay no troops to meet him, and no chance of augmenting the followers he had brought with him from his camp at Torwood.

On September 3rd, 1651, Cromwell fell upon Worcester with a large body of men, and meeting with hardly any resistance, broke the royalist forces and drove them back into the city, where the streets were soon strewn with the dead and wounded. The Earl of Derby had contrived to join the King, and though in great pain from his wounds, attended Charles closely throughout the whole fight. Cromwell called this battle of Worcester "Crowning Mercy."

Seeing the day was lost, the cavaliers crowded round Charles and persuaded him to fly. Mounted on a swift horse, he galloped through the ensanguined streets surrounded by a few friends, and hotly pursued by some of Cromwell's soldiers. He escaped through one of the city gates, for his cavaliers hastily overturned a huge hay-waggon after he had passed through, thus effectually blocking the gateway *pro tem.*, and preventing the Roundheads from following until they had removed the obstruction.

It was the Earl of Derby who, for the King's safety, persuaded Charles to separate himself from the rest of his companions, and who conducted him to Boscobel, a lone house on the borders of Staffordshire, where the King cut his hair short, changed his clothes, and was concealed by Richard Penderell (a Roman Catholic whom the Protestant monarch was assured he could trust).

Here the Earl left Charles and set out for Lancashire, with the intention, probably, of going to Lathom House; but unfortunately he was taken prisoner by Captain Edge, into whose hands he fell, and who gave him a promise of quarter, a promise afterwards most dishonourably violated. Bradshaw and his merciless myrmidons were determined to bring him to the scaffold. He was tried at Chester by twelve sequestrators, and sentence of death was passed on him for "trading by arms for Charles Stuart, defending Lathom House," etc., and he was ordered to be executed at Bolton.

While awaiting this unfair trial, he wrote to his distracted wife, then in the Isle of Man, a most touching letter, beginning: "My dearest heart," and ending: "so I rest everlastingly, your most faithful Derby."

From his dreary prison he also wrote a letter to his children, exhorting them to obey their mother and live godly lives.

Lord Strange rode post to London in hot haste, to try and save his father, and got his petition read in the junto by Mr. Leuthel; but Cromwell and Bradshaw knew not the quality of mercy, and he had to return to Bolton after his fruitless attempt. The gallant peer on his way to execution caught a glimpse of his weeping children on the roadside. At Knowsley one of the most precious relics is the chair in which he sat, while awaiting the headsman's fatal stroke. He was beheaded at Bolton on the 15th October, 1651. The next day his body was taken to Ormskirk, and there buried with his renowned ancestors.

At Chester there is a quaint old lath and plaster house, black and white magpie fashion, of Elizabethan type, called Stanley Palace, where it is said the Earl was in hiding for several weeks in a loft under the pointed roof, his place of concealment being known only to one faithful retainer, who brought him food. After the Earl's death, the Countess held the Isle of Man against all besiegers, and had the satisfaction of being the last person in the United Kingdom who yielded to the Parliamentary forces.

In the December following her husband's execution, she was compelled against her will to surrender the Island, and was imprisoned with her children, two of whom died in prison of smallpox, the Ned and Billy of the Earl's last letter.

Under all these crushing troubles Charlotte's courage at last broke down, and when liberated, she retired to Knowsley Hall, where she died on March 22nd, 1663.

The Isle of Man, which had been granted to Fairfax, was at length restored to the Stanleys, but not till many years after the Restoration.

Charlotte's eldest son, Charles, Lord Strange, married a German lady, Dorothea Helena Rupa. He died in 1672, and was succeeded by his son William, who died childless. The title then passed to William's younger brother James, who was the twenty-third Earl of Derby, and the eleventh of this family.

A Husband of the Philistine.

By K. SOLOMON.

SHE was thirty and he was thirty-five ; they were both old enough to have known better. But he was sick and tired of waiting patiently for what he considered Life owed him of happiness ; and decided to wrench it from the Fates at any cost. This determination came to him during the brief summer holiday, which, together with a modest £200 a year, represented the annual reward of much late and early toil in a dingy city office. His work had always been distasteful to him, and he had never been able to make any way in it. He had once begun to read for the bar, but at the right time means had not been forthcoming, and his father had jumped at an opening offered him in a friend's office, with hints of future promotion. This promotion may be presumed to have attained early achievement, for after a small increase in his salary at the end of the first three years, nothing further happened. And arrived at the verge of middle life, he found himself as far off from the longed-for haven of married happiness, as when he took his seat for the first time on that stool in the back office, and hope loomed large in the mists of futurity.

He had pictured to himself in dreams a woman with the face of Madonna and a soul immaculate, that represented to his imagination the highest feminine idea. This he had hoped to see one day embodied in the mistress of his heart and household. But he had told himself long since that not for him was the luxury of wife and child ; and he had been reduced to satisfy his desire for feminine communion in a society that was the reverse of ideal.

All this was forgotten, and the old fair dream came back to him that summer, when he met Edith Loftus at a boarding-house on the South Coast, and watched her soothing tendance of the old and invalid among its inmates. He thought how good it would be to have those soft white hands to smooth his hair and touch his forehead, and he felt the tone of her voice thrill through him like a caress. She possessed little so-called beauty, but the way her hair grew low upon her forehead, and the look in the mild brown eyes, recalled the Madonna of his dreams. And he took for granted that

her nature was expressed in her appearance. Its large maternity seemed to impress itself indeed on every action and speech. About her presence was an atmosphere of home, and all who came in contact with her felt the spell.

Our city clerk walked with her in the mornings through the pine-woods, and at evening on the cliffs by the sea shore; and never before had he realised the beauty that was in life and in the world. He thought to discover a wonderful harmony in their sentiments and opinions; and the discovery gave his own an added dignity.

As his holiday drew near to its close he became aware that parting would be a positive calamity. His asking her to marry him seemed rather a matter of necessity than of choice. He, who had held that to take any but a rich wife would be a suicidal act on his part, was not now troubled by any question of prudence. She had told him of the tiny income that came to her in half-yearly dividends, and this, added to his own earnings would, he believed, enable them to avoid the dreaded contingency of matrimony in lodgings.

Edith Loftus was glad enough to accept his offer. The prospect of home and a husband's love appealed to her strongly after many years of orphaned life. She had no hankering after fine clothes or expensive pleasures, and had had long practice in making a little money do the work of a great deal.

And the experiment was in the early days a great success. Our city clerk starting in the morning from his bright little home in Croydon, felt for the first time in his life, perhaps, that God was in his heaven and all well with the world.

But life refused to be coaxed for him into permanent smoothness. One baby came, and then another, and the want of elasticity about his income interfered with his appreciation of the parental position. Edith, looking up from her cradle with a divine joy in her eyes, met his glance resting on her and them, and the trouble in it leaped into her own. In spite of all her economies there was a little pile of unpaid bills in the corner cupboard, and some of her own once punctual dividends had ceased to put in an appearance. Things grew worse instead of better. Edith wrung her hands—on which tears were failing fast at thought of the pale drawn face that tried to smile at her a morning farewell, as she stood by the window, a babe in her arms and another by her side. The thought that it was marriage with her—with her who had learnt to love him so dearly—

which had brought this trouble upon him, was an added sting. Once in his presence she had broken into uncontrollable weeping, and had spoken to him of her sorrow and self reproach. He had drawn her to him, and had whispered that the boon of her presence was worth many other deprivations, and that his love for, and belief in, her had been the one good thing in his life.

Yet the desire to bring material help to her husband, took firm root in her mind, and it seemed to her at last that she had found a way. She would try if her pen could not be made a golden key to fortune's fickle favour. Though unsuspecting her own artistic talent, she had always allowed her fancy free play with all the surrounding life that passed before her; and keen sympathetic insight had revealed the hidden meanings and possibilities of things, sometimes only half heard, half seen. Now she looked back across the years, and, as she looked mists rolled away, and faces and events stood out in clear relief.

It was among those memories, themselves part fancies, that she searched for the subject of her story. It came without much seeking! Her heart had always gone out to the unhappy and the fallen, and her tale dealt with the life of a woman among these. She brought to her work the garnered thoughts and sentiments of an inarticulate past, and her pen ran on swiftly as she bent over her secret task with flushed cheeks and hopeful eyes. As she wrote, her own identity, her own troubles were lost and forgotten. She was the woman of her story, and wept her tears of shame and sorrow, and so it was that she breathed into her creation the breath of life.

Each day as she put the manuscript back into its hiding-place, she felt she was bringing help nearer to her husband and little ones; and to herself perhaps something might accrue, which, though unsought and undesired, might yet be worth the winning.

At length the morning arrived when she wrote *finis* at the end of her manuscript, and reading it from beginning to end was filled with the conviction that her work was good. She could scarcely endure to wait till evening to show it to her husband, and reveal her cherished secret. She pictured his delight at the prospect of relief from such an unexpected source. He must love her more than ever in the future, for pride in her talent would be an additional claim to his love. Perhaps of late he had found her less sympathetic; she had caught him sometimes looking curiously at her. Certainly the

belief that the hour of release was at hand, had made it difficult for her to attune her spirit to his sadness. But to-night there would be an explanation, and joy would return to the sad household.

Dinner was over in the little house at Croydon, and Edith sat at her husband's feet looking up into his face, while he read the carefully written lines of her manuscript. Her cheeks were pink, and a smile lingered on her lips, but there was keen anxiety in the eyes that awaited the verdict. For a long time the only sound in the room was the turning of pages—then followed silence. The manuscript had fallen from her husband's hand on to the carpet, and he sat with his head averted, looking into the fire. The colour had gone from her face, and her mouth quivered. "Dearest! won't you speak? Does not my story please you?"

There was a sob in her voice as she spoke, and laid a caressing hand on his arm. He shook it off impatiently and got up from his chair, gazing down upon her with a strange expression on his face, and her frightened eyes fell at the stern and alien look.

"What have I done?" she murmured.

He made no reply, but began pacing up and down the room. Then he turned towards her.

"Edith! in all my trouble I thought at least I had you. I believe I have almost worshipped you as a type of the highest and best. And now—this story! Edith! where did you learn these thoughts, these feelings? The woman is alive—she is yourself! As I read I seem to hear your voice saying terrible things—to see your smile in her eyes. It is like a horrible nightmare."

And he threw himself again on his chair, and covered his eyes with his hand. Edith, on her knees beside him, employed all her eloquence in explanation of the nature of the artistic imagination—of the necessity of the author's identification with his creations; but all the time she realised he would never understand. Then, sick at heart, she took the precious story that was to have meant so much to both of them and burnt it before his eyes. Yet even as she watched the cruel flames consume the sacrifice, she felt it had been made in vain, that henceforth a lasting shadow, dividing her from all that made life yet worth the living—her husband's love—had fallen athwart their lives.

From Hell Corner to Botany Bay.

By H. B. NEDHAM.

IN these days of cycles and motor-cars there certainly seems to be more of an Australian than a cockney ring about the heading of this article—a suggestion of the Bush and the convict settlements of “old time” colonial history. For all that, on a beautifully executed map of London, published in Waterloo year by William Darton, of Holborn, the name Hell Corner figures as that of a locality just touching Kensington Square, whilst Botany Bay was to be found on the *then* extreme north-east of the metropolis, by anyone caring to penetrate as far afield as the wilds of Hackney. Hell Corner, with its evil name and out-of-the-way position, reminds us that the great western highway, between Kensington and Knightsbridge, was the scene of many a daring outrage by footpads well into the present century, and such was the very lawless state of things, that until somewhere about 1830 a bell was rung every Sunday evening at Kensington, as a signal for visitors returning to town to assemble together for greater protection. At the period alluded to the whole district west of Sloane Street, was, with the exception of the Brompton Road and a few adjoining thoroughfares, practically unbuilt upon, and snipe and woodcock were often bagged by cockney sportsmen in the vicinity. Much of this area indeed remained market-gardens and orchards, intersected by narrow lanes with well trimmed hedges, until late in the sixties, and more than one unfortunate victim was robbed in these very lanes during the famous garotting epidemic, which was only finally put down by the summary infliction of the cat. During the Regency, the ground extending from Vauxhall Bridge to Hyde Park was in much the same condition, and we read that “Old Q” went out snipe shooting in the neighbourhood of the Monaster Tea Gardens, a former holiday resort, which derived its name from a monastery, and is now commemorated by a ‘bus service and a tavern. Our old pocket map indicates the fact that there were no Pimlico squares. Eaton Square was little better than a marsh, and the dukedom of Westminster did not as yet exist.

However, peregrinating eastward we presently pass the site of the Half Way House, a roadside hostelry of ugly repute for robbers and nightbirds, which stood near the present position of Prince's Gate until 1846. Hyde Park has indeed a history. Formerly an abbey manor, it saw its races under the Stuarts. Here it was that Cromwell was, more than once, within an inch of his death at the hands of plotters, and here it was that the Duke of Hamilton, and Lord Mohun, were killed in the famous duel, wherein the latter, in all probability, figured as a bravo along with Macartney, in a scheme of deliberate murder concocted by some of the Whigs of Marlborough's party. The condition of Hyde Park was so wild down to the present century, that as late as 1798 a woman named Sarah Grey was granted a pension of £18, because her husband had been accidentally shot by the keepers hunting *foxes*. Soldiers were continually being executed for desertion or other offences, and duels of a fatal character occurred within living memory.

Still steering east, we reach the top of Piccadilly, and remark on our chart a yellow line stretching from Carlton House to Oxford Street, showing "intended improvements" to be called Waterloo Place and Regent Street, names reminding us of the Iron Duke's recent "crowning victory," and of the fact that the old King George the Third became at last so hopelessly blind and insane, that he had to yield up the reins to the graceless "First Gentleman of Europe." Hard by is the French colony of Soho. Time was when we risked a meal advertised as "diner for four pences," somewhere near the south end of Dean Street. Alas! where now is that humble resort of hungry Communists? Not many minutes' walk thence was another restaurant, kept by one who took an active part under the Red Flag in Paris in '71. More than once we have supped on the excellent fare supplied by the *patron*, whose whispered association with barricades and worse added grim zest to our Bohemian appetites. Leicester Square, with its memories of Peter the Great, Prince Eugène, John Hunter, Reynolds and Hogarth, is indeed worth a volume all to itself. A prominent feature of the old "Fields" was the quaint equestrian statue of George the First. Some Londoners may remember having seen this decorated, pigtail, horse, and all, with a brand new coat of black and white paint, the outcome of midnight skylarking. To the juvenile mind it seemed as if some daring rocking-horse painter had committed high treason,

but on the whole it was considered a very well grounded protest, and it was the forerunner of much needed reform.

Having threaded our way through the aforetime aristocratic Seven Dials, we find ourselves in Holborn, the old highway for the gallows-cart from Newgate to Tyburn. It is curious that although the last Tyburn execution was as late as 1783, the precise whereabouts of the Golgotha is uncertain, some authorities locating the site at the Park corner, others at Connaught Square. On our left is the Old Bell with its quaint galleried inn yard, and its next-door neighbour the Black Bull, where, according to Betsy Prig, "the drinks is all good." And soon Newgate confronts us, grim and forbidding—a fit place of doom for the murderer. But others than murderers have been executed here. Between 1805 and 1818, over two hundred poor wretches were hanged for forgery alone, and a hundred thousand spectators would assemble to witness perhaps a dozen of their fellow-creatures swung off simultaneously. The aristocracy set the example, for the Wynns and the Pagets would hire rooms at the George, and enjoy the show in right good sort. In 1815, Elizabeth Fenning was hanged for poisoning. Her innocence was almost universally believed in, and her corpse was carried to the grave by six girls dressed in white. In a prettily laid out garden to the west of Gray's Inn Road her monument may be seen, not far from that erected to the memory of a granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell.

Our antipodean guest now takes us through Bishopsgate. The name of Spitalfields is perhaps a survival of the days when leprosy was common enough, and hospitals for its treatment a necessity. Here again is a French colony, where the English-speaking silk-worker or shop-keeper answers to the name of White, or Carey, or Masters, instead of Le Blanc, or Carré, or Le Maître of his Huguenot ancestry. The Hackney Road of four score years since, brought one soon among the green fields, and here right away on the very edge of London was the whereabouts of Botany Bay.

What a difference between then and now! In the east the district beyond Mile End was, to all intents and purposes, rural. The Isle of Dogs was a square mile of marsh, seven feet below high water level. In the north, St Pancras and Islington must have been more country-like than the neighbourhood of Muswell Hill is to-day. Paddington and Bayswater were almost streetless. South of the

Thames it was the same in many localities which are now thickly populated. Is not the name of Cherry Gardens a relic of this bygone aspect of the river-side? Deptford still had its "King's Dockyard," and Greenwich Hospital still sheltered the old tars, many of whom perhaps had lost a limb or two under Nelson, or maybe under that fire-eating sailor and racy novelist Marryat. Our map only shows half a dozen bridges spanning the Thames, but one spot of gloomy significance is plainly indicated, namely Execution Dock, where so many followers of the Jolly Roger met their doom, their bodies afterwards sun-drying in chains at Bugsby's Hole, Blackwall.

Certainly our forefathers, who played cricket in chimneypots at Lord's, caught salmon in the Thames, and knew nothing of railways, steamboats, county-councils, or school-boards, would be astonished if they could see how the builder and the engineer, and the rapid growth of the population, have changed the London of the Regency into the modern Babylon of nowadays. And still the expansion of the mighty metropolis goes on apace. Old landmarks are ruthlessly swept away, and new suburbs spring up with mushroom-like quickness. This should increase our reverence for what we have left of the historic past. The very railings of St. Paul's Cathedral, made in the Weald of Kent, are an object lesson on the shifting of the iron industries from the south to the north. A cannon standing as a doorpost elsewhere, may be a memento of one of brave old Rodney's sea-fights. The human leather on a chapel door of Westminster Abbey—made from the skins of burglarious priests flayed alive—is a gruesome memorial of the times when Westminster had its monks, and the spoiler, Henry the Eighth, had not yet given rise to a proverb, by taking from the shrine of Saint Peter to give to that of Saint Paul. But how few up-to-date Londoners know these things, or care one jot about the romance of the great city they dwell in and fancy they are so familiar with!

Notices of New Books.

IN these days when we are so lavishly supplied with fiction of every kind, it is difficult to decide which books are worthy of attention. There can, however, be little doubt that Mr. Anthony Hope's "PHROSO" (Methuen & Co.) ranks among the first of last month's publications. Mr. Hope writes with his usual charm and vivacity, and the fact that the plot and scene in "PHROSO" are laid among Turkish possessions, and that the Greek inhabitants play so important a part in the romance, certainly lends an additional interest to the perusal of the book just now, though the fascinating penmanship of its author is without doubt the greatest attraction. It is wonderful to observe how our excitement is retained from the first page to the last, though we never feel the situation to be strained. Perhaps, when we have finished the book, we may have to admit that though a thoroughly good story, "the facts are of course quite impossible," but romance is romance all the world over, and let us rather be thankful that though such miraculous adventures are beyond the reach of nineteenth century civilization, we have among us one who can clothe the romantic with such marvellous semblance of life.

A very handy volume has just been issued by Mr. G. Hadeler, of Leipzig. It is the first of the series of what, we suppose, will ultimately comprise a "LIST OF LIBRARIES" of the world. The present number includes about 600 of the libraries of the United States and Canada, and the volume to follow will deal with those of Great Britain. Such a work must be of peculiar interest to the bibliophile, and it naturally commends itself to the seller of books. We cannot but congratulate the enterprising publisher on the neatness of style, the good printing, and the well-planned arrangement of the works. The owners of the Libraries come in alphabetical order, with the number of volumes in library set opposite each name, while a short and concise paragraph states the contents, and points out any specialities in the different collections. At the end of the book there is an index of places, and an exhaustive analysis, in which the subjects of each library are carefully set forth. All this information is given in three languages—English, French and German, in separate columns on every page. Altogether the work gives proof of much careful thought and great labor.

E. R.